



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

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2005, 7.30pm, St Barnabas Millennium Hall

**Residents in attendance:** 45 including Committee

**BHS Members in attendance:** 18 including Committee

**Committee Members present:**

**Brentham Society:** Tony Miller (Chair), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Martin Mortimore

**Brentham Heritage Society:** Sue Elliott (Chair), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Adrian McAllister (BS), Sean Cadogan (BS), Heather Moore (BS/BHS), Barry Murphy (BS)

**The meeting was in two parts:**

### **PART 1: TALK BY BOB GURD OF EALING CIVIC SOCIETY**

#### **‘Conservation Areas: Museums or Living Communities?’**

Tony Miller introduced Bob Gurd, Chair of Ealing Civic Society (of which the Brentham Society is a corporate member) and Hanger Hill East Residents Association. Bob was active in the Ealing Centre Partnership, and had done much work on development and conservation issues as well as being instrumental in establishing and maintaining conservation areas in Ealing and putting pressure on the Council in regard to enforcement.

Bob Gurd summarised the history of Conservation Area legislation, explaining that Brentham was one of the few areas in Ealing in which development was controlled by an Article 4 direction. He outlined the threats facing conservation areas, showing local examples from a recent tour of Brentham and focussing particularly on extensions, hard standing, replacement windows and lighting. He hoped that his examples of ‘bad practice’ would not give offence to anyone present.

In answer to questions, Bob Gurd said that there was a problem with the definition of ‘enhancing’ the estate and a commonsense interpretation of the term was not always applied by the planners. A major problem was that the law was not properly enforced, owing to lack of staff.

People should be encouraged, but not forced, to replace hedges (their removal required Planning Permission). There were only two listed buildings on the estate, St Barnabas Church and the Brentham Club, and even these were unlikely to get grants to re-instate original features.

He confirmed that pavements would not be tarmac’d when lampposts were replaced. On the choice of replacement lampposts, both the Conservation Panel and the Brentham Society had preferred the swan-neck design to the Victorian style, because the latter were too tall for small Brentham streets and would not meet modern standards for street lighting. (The Civic Society had had a hand in the design of the lampposts on

Ealing Green.) Both the Council and the contractor EDF were against restoring the original cast-iron lampposts, because they did not meet modern standards. Replacement lampposts on the Brentham estate would probably be cast-iron, and certainly black.

The Civic Society had been against the expansion of Heathrow Airport. If better soundproofing of windows was required, it would be better to use sympathetically designed secondary glazing than to replace the windows with double-glazing. Pat Baxendale had the name of a company specialising in secondary glazing. Tony Miller confirmed that the Brentham Society gave out information packs with guidance on planning to all new owners. He encouraged anyone contemplating work on their house to take advice from Heather Moore or Pat Baxendale before going ahead.

A fuller report on Bob Gurd's talk will appear in the next edition of *Brentham News*.

## **PART 2: MAIN BUSINESS**

### **1. Minutes of the 2004 AGM and Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising from the minutes and these were accepted as a true record of the meeting – proposed by Bevan Jones, seconded by Pat Baxendale.

### **2. Chairs' Reports**

#### **(a) Brentham Society (Tony Miller)**

##### **Membership:**

Membership had risen again, to 338 members (49% of Brentham households), compared with 320 or 47% in 2004. Donations were also up – 136 members donated, representing 40% of members, compared with 134 (42%) last year. The total number of Friends, living outside the estate, was 37; they had contributed £64 in subscriptions and £120 in donations. He thanked all who donated.

The highest percentages of members were once again in Brentham Way, Ludlow and Woodfield Road, but there was an encouraging increase in membership in Neville Road, Woodfield Crescent and Pitshanger Lane. Holyoake Walk and Fowlers Walk were still disappointing.

Thanks were due to Sean and Debbi Cadogan of Neville Road for organising Membership and preparing revised 'new residents' packs; and to all the collectors, who help to recruit members and collect subscriptions. There were still some vacancies for collectors and a replacement was needed for Rosanna Henderson, who had stood down after a long stint organising the 'extra-terrestrials', and he thanked Rosanna.

##### **Newsletter and Communications:**

**Newsletter:** This had gone from strength to strength. Michael McCarthy had carried on the excellent work of Alan Henderson, who had continued to assist with editorial advice and technical help. The new A4 colour format had been a great success, plus 'News Updates' as necessary. The Brentham Society remained indebted to Grimshaws for their sponsorship, which had enabled us to maintain the quality of the document with colour, to accompany the expansion in editorial content. Contributions were still always welcome about news and events – to Michael please.

**Noticeboards:** David Webster had taken over from George and Anne Barnes last autumn, and had kept up the posting of notices advertising not only BS and BHS events but also local events of interest to residents. Tony Mackersie had kindly agreed to check the condition of the boards and refurbish where necessary.

**Website:** The new site had been just launched, following a complete overhaul by Peter and Wendy Sender, and now included a virtual tour of the estate with pictures of every property, which would be further reported by Sue under the BHS heading.

##### **Planning and Environment:**

Planning issues were dealt with by Heather Moore and himself. Heather continued to monitor and comment to the Planning Department on all applications received, and these continued at a steady rate of about 50 over the year, ranging from permission for tree work to new extensions.

Most were uncontroversial, approved with minimal changes, but some needed more substantial revision to meet Brentham's special requirements and Heather devoted considerable time to reviewing them. Prior consultation saved time and effort and Heather had continued to give this – indeed a very important part of what the BS Committee does is negotiating with residents.

The BS had continued to work with the independent Brentham Conservation Panel. Robert Holmes, the BS nominee on the Panel, had resigned after a heart attack and had been replaced by Tony Sever, joining Pat Baxendale and John Kelly. Tony was pleased and grateful that Pat Baxendale had returned to full activity after the serious accident to her husband Geoff, from which he had recovered remarkably well.

Work continued with the Conservation Panel and the Council Conservation Officer (regrettably now only one) on a new Policy and Design Guide for Brentham and a draft was in preparation to update the 1988 version.

Tony added that some builders still cut corners and did not work to plans as approved. Enforcement action would be taken when this happened, although the Council's Enforcement Department had been understaffed lately. The BS can help with advice if needed.

**Vivian Green:** Following a question at last year's AGM, the BS has confirmed that ownership and responsibility for the Green are firmly in Council hands. However the BS continued to monitor and care for the Green, and thanks were especially due to Tony Mackersie and Alan Henderson who had rescued the bench and the memorial plaque.

**Footpaths:** Less successfully, we had to abandon attempts to have the main footpaths through the estate adopted by the Council, as this would have been prohibitively expensive. The Council will however continue to light and maintain them as rights of way.

Finally, Tony reminded residents that, in the interests of conserving the character of Brentham, virtually any change to the outside of your house, including repairs and paintwork, hedges, fences, gates and walls does require Planning Permission and "**if in doubt, ask**".

#### **Events and Activities:**

There had been the usual full calendar of events, from Carol Singing and supporting the May Day procession and celebrations, to the annual Family Cycle in July, when a record 30 takers enjoyed better weather than last year.

Of the regular favourite annual events in June, the Strawberry Tea also had better weather than last year and, despite unavoidably clashing with the Party in the Park, was well-attended; guests included Steve Pound MP, the Mayor and local councillors. Particular thanks were due to Barbara Murray, whose 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive hosting of the event was marked by a presentation.

Brentham Open Garden Day had been organised for the second year by Nita Davis with her usual efficiency. Despite cold weather, 85 people visited eight gardens; entry fees grossed £213 and around half of this (£100) was donated to the Shooting Star Trust Children's Hospice for their garden appeal. Tony thanked all concerned for making the day such a success.

Thanks were also due to Jackie Moss for organising Brentham's participation in Open House Day and to Clive Hicks for his highly-recommended tours of the estate.

#### **Relations with local organisations:**

The BS had been working for closer co-operation with the Pitshanger Community Association and the Brentham Club, ranging from the design of the new 'Welcome to Pitshanger' signs and co-ordinating events calendars, to the Brentham Club regeneration.

He stressed that Sue Elliott acted on the Club's Regeneration Board in a personal capacity – both the BS and the BHS would retain their independence to comment on the details when planning permission is sought (detailed plans did not exist at present).

#### **Future projects**

A particular project for 2006 is the May Day centenary. The May Day committee has asked for help to celebrate – they plan for enhanced activities on the day and there will probably an Edwardian Music Hall the following evening. Help and advice would be welcomed.

#### **Priorities for Spending**

Tony requested members' views on other spending priorities: options included street signs, a street lighting study, new merchandise, the Newsletter, a grant to the BHS towards the book reprint, or joint individual membership of Ealing Civic Society and/or the PCA.

As regards giving money to the BHS, he said it was important to realise that the BHS accounts had to be kept separate, because they are submitted to the Charity Commission, and that there could be a problem for the BHS in returning funds which were no longer needed.

Members felt that producing Brentham-style street names was worth doing and would enhance the street scene (the Council would only replace damaged signs with modern ones).

There was no hope of getting BT to replace the modern 'phone box in Brentham Way – in fact the existing box was so little used that it might well disappear.

Alex Borissov thought it was a good idea to develop merchandise, both as an investment and to publicise the estate. As Chairman of the Visual Arts section of Ealing Arts, he was also interested in reciprocal membership and joint projects.

Bevan Jones suggested Christmas cards, but Tony replied that these could hang around for too long and would not sell in succeeding years.

Krys Mackersie suggested that, as previously, the BS could organise skips for people to use in tidying up, e.g. the back alleyways. Tony commented that this could be a good idea. Most alleyways were the joint responsibility of residents in adjoining houses; some belonged to Grainger Trust, but he had not succeeded in getting them to admit which strips of land they owned.

#### **(b) Brentham Heritage Society (Sue Elliott)**

Sue explained that the Brentham Heritage Society (BHS) was the sister organisation to the Brentham Society. As a registered charity, its objects were to inform and educate the public about Brentham, its architectural and social history, and to maintain its large archive.

The BHS started the year last November with funds of about £18,000 and four ambitious projects to see through:

1. *To commission a reprint of the Brentham centenary book*
2. *To commission a film about Brentham, its history, architecture, traditions and conservation, which would be available on DVD at a reasonable cost*
3. *To complete the photo audit of every building in Brentham for the archive and for the website*
4. *To develop the Brentham website.*

There had been substantial progress to report on each:

**Book reprint:** A slightly revised and updated edition would be available early next year. The original print-run of 1750 was now all but exhausted, but it was important to keep the book in print. Pitshanger Books were thanked for promoting the book and for selling it steadily. Because of its high quality and numerous illustrations, the book was expensive to produce. A print-run of 750 for the reprint should last about 10 years; it would provide income to the BHS for its other educational activities and thus would be an important investment towards fulfilling BHS objectives.

**Brentham Film:** Two local companies had tendered for the film. Martin Mortimore Associates had been chosen on the basis of value for money and depth of local knowledge. The film would be available as a one-hour DVD containing a 40-minute film on *A Year in the Life of Brentham*, plus bonus features: interviews with long-established residents and a section on conservation to demonstrate how it works in practice. Sue hoped the video would be on sale early next year at modest cost. Martin had been co-opted onto the BHS committee for the duration of the project.

**Photo Survey:** This had been carried out by Wendy Sender, a former resident, who had won the commission on value for money and sheer enthusiasm. The survey was now complete and available to view on the Brentham website at [www.brentham.com](http://www.brentham.com). The purpose of the project was to provide a 'snapshot in time' of Brentham, but also to make a record of each building for archive and reference purposes (useful in planning applications and decisions). Albums of high-resolution photos of every building and all blocks of houses had been produced and were now in the archive, and CD-ROMs had been given to Ealing's Conservation Officers for reference.

**Website:** Webmasters Peter and Wendy Sender had overhauled the website with new pages, new links and, of course, the photo survey. Thanks were due to Michael McCarthy for acting as web editor.

#### **Other Activities**

Educational activities during the year had included a visit to the Emery Walker House in Chiswick in April, where Brentham book author Aileen Reid is curator; a successful visit to the V & A's Arts and Crafts exhibition in May, and the annual Open House weekend tours by Clive Hicks in September.

The BHS had also started preliminary work on getting an English Heritage blue plaque for Fred Perry's house when he becomes eligible in 2009.

### **Summary**

This had been a very active but expensive year (as the Treasurer would report), but Sue believed that the BHS had made a sound investment in educational tools that help to meet its charitable objects to disseminate information about Brentham's special character and needs. The BHS would need to fund-raise to meet all its commitments in the coming year. Since the BHS is a charity, all donations could be made via Gift Aid and legacies would also be welcome.

### **Website: [www.brentham.com](http://www.brentham.com)**

Following her report, Sue invited Wendy Sender to give a brief demonstration of the website and the Photo Survey. Wendy said that the website had been redesigned, with new software, making it much easier to update. The number of web pages had increased from 23 to 36, plus a further 1300 pages for the Photo Survey, and the site included side headings and numerous links.

There were sections on the BS and BHS; News, mainly taken from the Newsletter; the History of Brentham, and a Resources section, which included Planning (with practical hints on improving your home – a good starting point for those thinking of making changes) and the Photo Survey.

Wendy commented that the quality or resolution of the 1300 Photo Survey images on disk in the Brentham Archive was up to 100 times greater than that of the 600 or so images that appear on the website. She demonstrated how the individual house photos could be accessed, either via a virtual tour – by clicking on a map of Brentham – or from a Street Index. For each house there was a page of history, showing the architect and date (where known – these had been gleaned from the original house plans), and other interesting information, e.g. about previous occupants. Wendy made a plea for any additional information to add to these history pages.

Although the survey brief had been to document the architecture, not to produce 'pretty pictures', Sue suggested that, if there was sufficient demand, photos of individual houses could be made available, mounted but not framed, for a small cost (say, £10-15). The meeting showed some interest in this idea. Sue thanked Wendy and congratulated her on a brilliant achievement.

## **3. Treasurer's Report (Richard Costella)**

### **(a) Brentham Society**

Subscriptions and donations were marginally down on the previous year, but this was because some were received after the end of the financial year. Subscriptions were in fact up, to 49% of the houses on the estate.

The rest of the accounts showed no significant changes to income or expenditure during the year, but did show the variety of projects that the BS gets involved in. The Society had made another good surplus.

One aspect of this was that the BS had been able to make charitable donations from the income from events. For example all the profits from the Brain of Brentham quiz were donated to the Mayor of Ealing's Fund.

### **(b) Brentham Heritage Society**

The BHS accounts were much more focussed on projects. Sales of the Brentham book had continued, albeit at a lower level than the previous year, and provided the bulk of the income. The other main income came from a donation towards the proposed reprint of the book.

Expenditure in the year was concentrated on two main projects, the photographic survey and the Brentham DVD.

The Society had healthy reserves, and as a charity it had a reserves policy. The funds had been earmarked for the three main projects, the photographic survey (final payment now made), the DVD, and the reprint of the Brentham book, and the majority would be spent in the next year.

As always, both sets of accounts had been audited by an independent auditor, and Richard thanked Andy Akerman from Meadvale Road for his help.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Pam Turner, seconded by Alan Henderson and agreed nem con.

#### **4. Election of Committees 2005-06:**

##### **(a) Brentham Society**

The following members were willing to stand again: Tony Miller (Chair), Sean Cadogan, Richard Costella (Treasurer), Heather Moore, Martin Mortimore and Barry Murphy.

Adrian McAllister and Eleanor Cowie did not wish to stand again. Tony Miller thanked Eleanor for the support that she had given him as Chair, and previously to Sue Elliott, during her three years as BS Secretary.

As there were no contested places, election of the Committee en bloc was proposed by David Humphries, seconded by Rosanna Henderson and agreed unanimously. Tony repeated that the Committee would appreciate any help to take things forward.

##### **(b) Brentham Heritage Society**

The following members were willing to stand again: Sue Elliott (Chair), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Richard Costella (Treasurer), and Heather Moore. As no nominations for new members had been received, election of the Committee en bloc was proposed by Wendy Sender, seconded by Bevan Jones and the Committee was duly elected.

#### **5. Garden Awards**

Nita Davis thanked Brian Vaughan for once again judging the gardens and expressed Brian's thanks to Gill Silvester and Maureen Monaghan for their help with the judging. Nita explained that there were three awards, for the Spring, Summer and Autumn seasons, plus the Rose Bowl for overall excellence.

<u>Award</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Runners-up</u>
Spring	37 Woodfield Crescent	71 Woodfield Road, 71 Meadvale Road, 42 Denison Road
Summer	51 Ludlow Road	26 Ludlow Road, 9 Denison Road, 42 Holyoake Road
Autumn	10 Neville Road	67 Meadvale Road, 5 Ludlow Road, 20 Brentham Way

The Rose Bowl was awarded to 39 Brentham Way – a well deserved award.

Tony Miller expressed his thanks to those attending and to Bob Gurd for his interesting talk and the meeting closed at 9:58pm.