



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

Thursday 18th October 2007, 7.30pm, Brentham Club

Residents in attendance: 47 including Committee

BHS Members in attendance: 15 including Committee

Committee Members present:

Brentham Society:

Tony Miller (Chair), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Heather Moore, Martin Mortimore

Brentham Heritage Society:

Sue Elliott (Chair), Richard Costella (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Heather Moore

I. Pre-AGM

1. Talk by Edward Kitchen

Heather Moore introduced Edward Kitchen, Conservation Officer, Richmond Council, who gave an illustrated talk entitled **Repair, Re-use, Recycle – Sustainable Alternatives to Heritage Landfill** in which he outlined how considerations of energy efficiency and sustainability could be applied to historic buildings and conservation areas, and Brentham in particular.

2. Results of Tree Competition

To mark the 20th Anniversary of the Great Storm of October 1987, Audrey Jones had kindly sponsored a competition for a photograph, drawing, painting, poem or other piece of creative work celebrating a Brentham tree. Pat Baxendale announced that there were three equal winners: Ciara Trill (aged 5), Freya Gann (7) and Lucy Moss (11). The names of all the entrants would appear in the Newsletter.

Audrey was thanked for sponsoring the competition; she and Alan Henderson had brought along some archive photos of the Great Storm, which were on display.

3. Brentham Club

Tony Miller drew residents' attention to the Brentham Club's 'Buy a Brick' campaign and also to a fund-raising Auction Evening in aid of the Club's refurbishment programme.

4. 1911 Pathé Newsreel

Martin Mortimore showed a film of the opening of the Brentham Club in 1911, which had been discovered in the BFI Archives by Aileen Reid; Sue Elliott provided a running commentary. At less than one minute long, the film showed the official guest party, including the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, watched by residents standing in the gardens of their houses in Meadvale Road, and ended with a shot of maypole dancing on the cricket field. The film included the only piece of moving footage in existence to feature Brentham's founding father, Henry Vivian. Sue thanked Martin for editing the film, a copy of which had been obtained for the Brentham Archive.

Dave Hobbs was to have given a short presentation illustrating what can happen in a garden suburb where the regulations are not enforced, but this was cancelled owing to technical problems. The photos will appear in a future Newsletter.

II. AGM

The Committee members present introduced themselves and Tony Miller conveyed apologies for absence from Sean Cadogan, Pippa Kelly and Barry Murphy of the Brentham Society.

1. Minutes of the 2006 AGM and Matters Arising:

The minutes had been distributed to those present. As there were no matters arising, these were accepted as a true record of the meeting – proposed by Jennifer Prior and seconded by Barbara Murray.

2. Brentham Society (BS) Chair's Report – Tony Miller

Highlights:

Key concerns of 2007 had revolved round planning and the struggle to preserve the character of the conservation area. It was particularly good to see approval of the planning application to refurbish the Club, and this was now going ahead. Equally long-running and important was the passing of the new Article 4 Direction, clarifying and strengthening the restrictions on changes to the character of the area, in particular the surfacing of front gardens, including hard standing, paths, patios and other paving and non-porous finishes. Every resident had had notice of this.

Membership:

This was down slightly on last year – 50% of Brentham households had now paid up (compared with 51% in 2006), representing 344 members (346 in 2006). In addition, there were 23 Friends (i.e. former residents etc. living off the estate).

Donations were also down slightly: 107 (31% of members) had given an extra contribution; in 2006 the corresponding number was 113 (33%). The Friends had given a further £103, making £1,313 in total. Tony thanked all who had donated, thus helping to keep membership fees down to the bargain price of £2.

Thanks were also due to the collectors and to Kim Butler and Catrin Morgan, who had taken over from Sean and Debbi Cadogan last year. Unfortunately, owing to changes in their personal circumstances, Kim and Catrin were not able to continue, so replacements were urgently needed.

Newsletter and Communications:

Newsletter: Michael McCarthy had continued to produce *Brentham News* in the full A4 colour format, with an extension to six pages for Issue No. 161 in September. 'News Updates' had also continued as necessary. The BS remained grateful to him and to Grimshaws for their sponsorship, without which the quality of the document with colour could not be maintained. Contributions were still always welcome about news and events – to Michael please, at the address on the Newsletter.

Noticeboards: After several years of posting of notices advertising not only BS and BHS events but also local events of interest to residents, David Webster had had to give up this task. He was thanked not only for reliably and regularly performing this task, but also for finding David Denscombe as his replacement. The Society was grateful to Tony Mackersie for continuing to check the condition of the boards and refurbish them where necessary.

Website: The website had continued under the watchful eye of Wendy Sender. It was hoped soon to be adding detailed guidelines on planning, drafted in conjunction with the independent Conservation Panel. Residents were encouraged to use it and to send comments to Wendy.

Planning and Environment:

The numerous planning applications continued to be handled by Heather Moore in conjunction with the Conservation Panel. The former Council Conservation Manager (Graham Tite) had been replaced by a new Conservation & Urban Design Team Leader (Iride Rosa). Now that work was progressing on the completion of conservation area assessments elsewhere in the Borough – a Government initiative applying to every conservation area – it was hoped that the much-deferred work on a new Policy and Design Guide would quickly follow a revised area appraisal for Brentham next year.

The Council's enforcement team had been strengthened during the year; there was a new Enforcement Manager and Tony hoped this would result in quicker action to ensure that breaches of regulations, including the problem of some builders cutting corners and not working to approved plans, would be dealt with.

Events and Activities:

The May Day procession had managed to go ahead despite the appalling weather immediately before, but for only the second time in two decades the maypole dancing had to be taken indoors, through the kind permission of St Barnabas. The future of the whole event, however, still depended on the very small ad hoc committee of volunteers (not part of the BS). More support in the future would be essential if the event were to survive.

The BS had put on the usual full calendar of events, from Carol Singing to the annual Family Cycle in July. The Strawberry Tea continued to be a high point in the local calendar, with a good turnout, which included Steve Pound MP and local councillors. Many thanks were once more due to Barbara Murray for hosting it.

Brentham Open Garden Day had attracted a record attendance, thanks to careful organisation by Laura Mackiewicz and Carole Fairclough. There had been a good number of visitors to the gardens, several of them open for the first time. A record amount of £702 had been donated to Meadow House Hospice. Tony expressed his thanks to all, especially to those who had opened their gardens and provided teas.

Thanks were also due to Jackie Moss and Clive Hicks for their contribution to the tours round the estate for Open House Weekend.

Relations with local organisations:

The BS continued to work for closer co-operation with the Brentham Club and the Pitshanger Community Association (PCA) and Tony encouraged people to make use of the Club's facilities.

Projects:

A number of items noted last year had been progressed. In particular:

Street signs: Eight of the 14 signs noted for refurbishment had so far had attention, thanks to Graham Fox and Tony Mackersie. One or two would be replaced in the coming year.

New merchandise: This had proved very popular and continued to sell well.

Street lighting renewal had been the subject of several discussions with the Council, but decisions had been left for next year's budget. Tony was shortly due to meet the Council's head of Street Management.

"Streets for people" and 20 mph zone: The latest consultants' report on Pitshanger Lane was still awaited, but the Council was planning to implement a new 20 mph zone for Brentham and Pitshanger next year, pending the results of consultation.

Arcadia Centre:

As a member of the environment committee of Ealing Civic Society, Tony had joined Save Ealing Centre – an alliance of local residents' groups aimed at improving the proposal to redevelop the Centre. (Pictures from the official planning application lodged with the Council were on display.) Comments on the planning application had to be submitted by mid-December, for a decision early in the new year.

Everyone in W5 should have received a letter from the Council, detailing whom to write to about the plans. In principle, the plans were on view in the Council office and also summarised on the Council's website, but were not easy to access.

Tony felt that the planned development represented a total change in the centre of Ealing. It appeared that only a minority had in fact received the letter and Pat Baxendale said there was a need to put pressure on the Council to make the plans more available to the public; Tony said he had made that point via Councillors. Wendy Sender requested more information to put onto the Brentham website. Tony said that the SEC campaign needed funds and that member groups, including the BS, had been asked to contribute £100 each. This was approved by those present.

Future work:

The Committee remained open to suggestions and Tony reminded those present that all work depends on members' help and that full participation from residents was needed to keep the BS going.

Martin Mortimore presented Tony with a gift of wine from the Committee, to thank him for his hard work over the past three years as Chair. Tony, who would be staying on as Vice-Chair, possessed an invaluable knowledge of the labyrinthine workings of the Council and was willing to do anything on behalf of the BS, including clearing up graffiti, going on litter patrols, providing his car with sunroof for tracking shots of May Day and showing a tenacious interest in lampposts.

3. Brentham Heritage Society (BHS) Chair's Report – Sue Elliott

The BHS had set itself two main priorities for the year:

- To complete an application to English Heritage for a Blue Plaque for Fred Perry on 223 Pitshanger Lane, where he grew up and lived until he moved to America;
- To produce a publication on Brentham architecture to help residents and others understand how our houses are constructed so that we can conserve and look after them better.

It was also intended to produce a range of postcards from the vast range of photos in the Brentham archive, and to build up BHS finances after the costs involved in producing the book reprint and the DVD last year.

Blue Plaque:

A six-page application had been sent off in May, full of biographical and other information in support of the case for a Blue Plaque. It was clear from our research that Brentham was where Fred Perry first learned and developed his formidable sporting skills. He not only won Wimbledon three years running, but was also a World Table Tennis champion and no slouch on the football field either. Many people had helped with the application, including sports journalist Jon Henderson, who was in the process of writing Perry's biography. The Lawn Tennis Association and the All England Lawn Tennis Club, who run Wimbledon, had lent their support, and Iver and Veronica Benattar who live at 223 Pitshanger Lane had been very helpful. Now we had to wait till 2009 for the result, when he would become eligible for a Plaque.

Architecture publication:

Preparations were well in hand for the architecture publication. A young American post-graduate student in conservation architecture had been appointed to produce the copy and photos for an illustrated guide to Brentham's architectural features – doors, windows, roofs, gutters, porches and so on – as a reference guide for residents repairing, restoring or extending their homes. He would start next spring, guided by a small editorial group and supervised by conservation architect and Brentham resident Ian Brocklebank.

Work had begun on the postcards idea and this would be carried forward into next year.

Educational Activities:

The charitable objective of the BHS was to inform and educate the public about Brentham. This was done in a variety of ways:

Website (www.brentham.org.uk): A key resource for our activities, shared with the BS, but run by the BHS. Sue commended Web Editor Wendy Sender for doing a fantastic job in making sure the site was up-to-date with news and information and she urged those who had access to the internet to use it as the best means the Societies have for getting information out to residents. This year the site passed the 10,000 mark for hits, and had brought contacts from all over the world and requests for the book and DVD from far and wide. Two guests at this year's May Day had travelled specially from Hawaii to witness and photograph the event for a children's book, after discovering the Brentham website via Wikipedia.

Representing Brentham at national events and conferences: This year these included Hampstead Garden Suburb's centenary celebrations, a TCPA conference on the future of garden suburbs, and another on Community Archives – as a result the existence of the Brentham Archive and its treasures was now publicised on a national website.

Organising trips to extend residents' knowledge of the Arts and Crafts and Garden Suburb movements. On a wild and wet day in July, 14 people had visited Charleston, the Sussex base of the Bloomsbury Group of artists and writers, and learned a lot from two excellent guides.

London Open House Weekend: Clive Hicks had again acted as expert guide on two tours in September for about 40 visitors to the estate, some from as far afield as Watford and Bermondsey.

Brentham Book and DVD: These continued to sell steadily (thanks to Bee and Walter Wyeth) and we were delighted when Aileen Reid discovered the existence of the 1911 Pathé newsreel of the opening of the Club, just shown.

Sue ended her report by saying that this had been a productive year, in which the BHS had continued to seek out ways to spread the word about Brentham and its special qualities.

4. Treasurer's Report (Richard Costella)

Copies of the Accounts had been distributed to those present and Tony and Sue had already noted the highlights of the year.

(a) Brentham Society

Without the excitement of the May Day centenary, the accounts had settled down to their more routine level of activity.

Subscriptions were marginally down on 2006 (which had been distorted by late subs from the previous year). Most of the Society's other income came from regular events, and sales of merchandise were well down on the previous year, when the May Day celebrations had given them a boost. Proceeds from two specific events were now donated to charity.

There had been some expenses on repairing signs, notice boards and the bench on Vivian Green.

Overall, income had exceeded expenditure by £984, allowing the reserves to return to the level of previous years.

In answer to a query about grass-cutting on Denison Green, Richard explained that the BS acts as banker for monies collected from the residents, holding the money and paying it out as required – it was not part of the Profit & Loss account.

(b) Brentham Heritage Society

This had been a much less 'exciting' year than last year, when the book reprint and DVD were launched; in fact it could be described as a year of consolidation. Sales of the books and DVDs had allowed the BHS to rebuild some of its reserves after the previous year's outflow of funds.

By the end of the year the reserves had been built up to a reasonable amount, allowing future plans to be considered once again.

Richard thanked Andy Akerman of Meadvale Road for auditing both sets of accounts.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Clive Hicks, seconded by Bevan Jones, and agreed nem con.

5. Election of Committees 2006-07:

(b) Brentham Society

The Constitution allows for eight members and up to two co-opted members. Sean Cadogan and Barry Murphy had resigned and Kim Butler and Catrin Morgan (co-opted as Membership Secretary and Street Rep. Co-ordinator during the year) did not wish to stand for election. The following members were willing to stand again: Tony Miller, Richard Costella (Treasurer), Pippa Kelly (Secretary), Heather Moore and Martin Mortimore.

Tim Llewellyn of 12 Brentham Way and Dave Hobbs of 65 Brentham Way had each been nominated by Tony Miller and Heather Moore. No other nominations for new members had been received. Separate votes were taken for each nominee and they were duly elected. Election en bloc of the remaining members of the committee was proposed by Pat Baxendale and unanimously agreed.

Tony mentioned that there were now vacancies for the Membership Secretary and Street Rep. Co-ordinator roles and that anyone interested in joining the Committee could be co-opted after the meeting.

(b) Brentham Heritage Society

The Constitution allows for between four and nine members. The following members were willing to stand again: Sue Elliott (Chair), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Richard Costella (Treasurer), and Heather Moore. Sue explained that Martin Mortimore was co-opted onto the Committee on a rolling basis.

As no nominations for new members had been received, the Committee was elected en bloc by those BHS members present.

6. Garden Awards

Tony Miller thanked Brian Vaughan for once again judging the gardens and Nita Davis expressed Brian's thanks to Maureen Monaghan, Pam Webster and Mike Gaunt for help with the judging, in a year which, unlike last year, had been marked by low temperatures and rain. Before revealing the results, Nita commented that this year's Open Day organised by Laura and Carole had been extremely successful and that Sally Kelly had played an enormous part in propagating and growing plants for sale.

Six years ago, Maureen Monaghan had started up the afternoon and evening Gardening Groups and had continued to run them. Maureen had decided to stand down for the time being and was thanked for her foresight and hard work, as well as her advice, enthusiasm and contribution to the meetings. The groups would look forward to her continuing presence.

Nita then announced the winners of the three awards, for the Spring, Summer and Autumn seasons:

Spring Award: 57 Meadvale Road

Runners-up: 16 Woodfield Crescent, 206 Pitshanger Lane, 47 Meadvale Road

Summer Award: 33 Ludlow Road

Runners-up: 21 Ludlow Road, 23 Brentham Way, 26 Holyoake Walk

Autumn Award: 119 Fowlers Walk

Runners-up: 194 Pitshanger Lane, 38 Holyoake Walk, 14 Denison Road

The Rose Bowl for overall excellence was awarded to 111 Fowlers Walk.

7. Members' Questions

A new resident commented that aircraft noise would increase in future and that Heathrow development plans were due to be decided very soon. He urged anyone with concerns to write to the Aviation Minister, Jim Fitzpatrick, at the Houses of Parliament. Tony Miller responded that the BS had not taken a formal stance, but drew attention to the Ealing Aircraft Noise Action Group and HACAN campaigns against the third runway – these were the best way for residents to get involved. The BS Committee would consider contacting EANAG and the subject should be mentioned in the Newsletter. Heather Moore commented that it was important for residents to respond individually as well, in view of the other commitments of the BS Committee, and they should write to their Councillors and MP as well as the Minister.

As there were no other questions, Tony Miller asked again for all to volunteer what time and skills they could to the Committees, then thanked residents for attending.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.