



*Brentham Garden Estate, Ealing*

## NEWS

### Notes from the Chair

This edition of Brentham News is the last of this centenary year and these notes are my last as Chair. It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to be Chair during this year which began with the publication of '*Brentham – A history of the pioneer garden suburb 1902-2001*', continued with a weekend of celebrations in June and is about to conclude with the naming of Vivian Green.

I am delighted that Professor Sir Peter Hall has very kindly accepted our invitation to give the talk at our AGM next month. As the author of the Introduction to '*Brentham*' and an eminent figure in town planning it is particularly appropriate that he is our speaker in our centenary year. I hope that many of you will take this rare opportunity to hear what he has to say.

May saw the annual May Day Festivities on a bright sunny day. It's an event that appears just to 'happen' each year and it so easy to forget all the hard work and commitment by a few (it is organized by a May Day committee, not by the Brentham Society) that make the continuation of this old Brentham custom possible. New helpers are always welcome and essential if this tradition is to be maintained.

I wrote in an earlier edition about applications for planning permission for various developments at Brentham Club. The Planning Committee of Ealing Council refused those applications for development. Notting Hill High School and the Brentham Club have appealed against the decision regarding the artificial hockey pitch. We now await a final decision from the Planning Inspectorate.

Inside is the first of a series of Conservation Notes by Ealing's Conservation Officer, Adam Watrobski. I hope that you will find these informative and helpful in caring for these old houses and that they will enable you to avoid some rather costly pitfalls – please let us have your views.

**Heather Moore.**

### ***STOP PRESS***

Due to our intervention, and with the sterling support of Ealing's Conservation Officer Adam Watrobski, the Haven Arms meeting room, Brentham's 'birthplace' - will be restored for public use as part of redevelopment plans for the pub now with Ealing Council. We'll bring you details as soon as we have them.

## VIVIAN GREEN

The co-partnership scheme is alive, well still working on the Brentham Estate albeit in a modified manner. To commemorate the Centenary of the Garden Suburb, the Brentham Committee decided to refurbish the green area opposite the Brentham Club and re-name it Vivian Green in honour of Henry Vivian, a driving force in the original co-partnership scheme.

Over the past months a band of volunteers working in collaboration with Ealing Council has undertaken a number of projects that should be completed by Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September when Barbara Norrice, Henry Vivian's daughter, will conduct the official re-naming ceremony. It is hoped that the Mayor as well as our MP Steve Pound will attend.



The Council dig out the roots.

The Brentham Society is grateful to officers of Ealing Council Parks and Countryside Services, particularly Eric James, for organising much of the heavy labour as well as the provision of one new bench. The Brentham Society has purchased another bench, inscribed to commemorate the centenary.

We hope you enjoy sitting on the Green once again next summer.

**Krys Mackersie**



Volunteers cut down the bushes



Graham Fox buries a time capsule with, amongst other things -a copy of Brentham News inside!

Tony Mackersie made a great job of repainting the Holyoake Walk sign and is



seen here with Michael McCarthy and Alan Henderson getting ready to replace all the fence posts. Once the posts were firmly set the chain link was repainted and put back.

Thanks go to all those who've been involved, from those liaising with the Council to the providers of the cups of tea. Special thanks to the lady who allowed us to use her garden hose – it saved us a lot of heavy carrying.

This has been a real community project.

## NEWS FROM



The BHS has been busy on a number of projects designed to inform and educate people about Brentham, its architectural and social heritage.

- The huge task of cataloguing **the Brentham Archive** photos has begun under the unflagging energy of archivist Alan Henderson and committee member Eleanor Cowie. During preparations for the Brentham book and following its publication, we received many donated photographs and these, together with the collection of large format photographs donated by the Bradford Property Trust, all need careful indexing and conserving in museum-standard folders.
- **Planning issues:** the BHS made submissions to Ealing Planning Department on proposals to make major alterations to the stable block and upstairs public meeting room adjoining The Haven Arms. The Brentham pioneers met here in 1901 to plan the estate, so we have an interest in its sympathetic conservation. We await the Council's decision. We also made a submission to the Planning Inspectorate following the Brentham Club's appeal against Ealing Council's rejection of their plan for an Astroturf hockey pitch at the rear of Meadvale Road. Again we await the outcome.
- We are discussing with Ealing's Schools History Inspector our plans for **Primary school resource packs** based on the Brentham book, and will meet local history teachers this autumn. If you're a primary school teacher we'd love to have your ideas and feedback too.
- Look out for the **Brentham exhibition at Gunnersbury Park Museum** starting in October for three months. This will illustrate Brentham's origins in the Co-partnership movement, its architectural development and its social life over the years. Entry is free. Please go along and have a look at the plans, photos and artefacts on show.
- **Book sales and publicity:** sales have levelled off after the initial hectic activity of the first six months, but global interest in the book is beginning to take off – we have received orders from Australia, Canada and Chicago, Houston and Stanford in the USA. We have enough copies to see us through till the end of the year and then we'll think about a reprint in 2002. Meanwhile, positive reviews are still appearing in specialist journals and we'll display all of these at .....
- **... the BHS AGM** – after the Brentham Society AGM on 18<sup>th</sup> October. If you would like to join the BHS Committee or get involved in its work, speak to us at the AGM. See you there. Alternatively contact:

Sue Elliott ☎ 8998 9978 or  
Wendy Sender ☎ 8997 4123

## A review of summer events



A casual observer walking through Pitshanger Park on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July might well have wondered why a very mixed bag of cyclists were gathering. Had your correspondent not been in the know he would have assumed that it was some sort of “demo” promoting or denigrating some particular bee in their bonnets. The rider’s ages ranged from five year olds to one very old decent sport well past his “sell by” date, (your correspondent no less).

It was, of course, the **Brentham Bike Ride**; thirty riders took part in a delightful ride to Osterley Park and rewarded themselves with a cream tea. The chosen route was surprisingly green and pleasant through parks and along river and canal towpaths.

When we arrived at Osterley, thousands of people were there to welcome us. Your correspondent refuses to believe that they were there for any other purpose ... it just happened that our arrival coincided with some sideshow probably put on to keep the waiting crowds happy. (Actually it was Osterley’s annual “Art in the Park” day. Ed.)

And so back to Brentham; three of us went ahead of the main party to ensure that a few seats at “Duffys” would be available for our weary travellers on their return. A great finish to a successful afternoon.

A number of us have been doing short Sunday morning rides for some time (not just so that we were sure to be able to beat the five year olds!). If anyone would like to join us you’d be more than welcome to come along.

Contact: George Barnes ☎ 8997-8327

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### Seen at the Edwardian Picnic



Kids entertainer Dave from “Albert & Friends” takes a break from stilt walking and juggling

Lionel Ferris with his penny-farthing.

Hurdy-Gurdy Man David Chatterley



## The Centenary Weekend

### Edwardian Picnic

A hurdy-gurdy man, a brass quartet, a stilt walker, a traditional sweet stall, period bicycles, a tug of war, a teddy bear parade, 300 people, some Edwardian costumes, and sunshine made for a terrific afternoon in June on Denison / Ludlow Green.



The ladies were stars of the day with their splendid hats.



The hats were paraded and all participants received a beautifully designed souvenir certificate.

Also on display was the 8ft x 8ft map of the estate to display the photos of people outside their houses. There were about 130 photos placed on the map – a terrific response from you all and a fascinating record of life in 2001 for the archive. We'll be displaying the map again at the AGM for those of you who didn't get to see it and if you're not in it you still have time to get a picture organised and bring it along.

### The Open Garden Day & Strawberry Tea

This year the traditional Strawberry Tea held in Barbara Murray's garden was combined with the Open Garden Day. Once again fine weather made the day a great success.

Teas were also served in Maureen & Michael McCarthy's garden and so we needed twice as many helpers, kettles and teapots as usual. Whilst some managed to get around to see all the gardens others decided to sit in the sunshine and catch up with old friends. A number of ex-residents who had made contact through the Brentham Book came along to see how the place was and relive some of their memories. It was really nice to meet them all – we hope you'll come again.

**A big thankyou** to all the organisers, particularly Sue van Raat for all her hard work in making Saturday such a success, to all those who opened their gardens, to all the helpers on both days, to the Brentham Club for lending us some tables and chairs and to you for coming along and making the weekend so memorable.



Jonathan Pearce prepares the rope for the tug-of-war contest: Duffys v Brentham Club.

Later he presided over a children's contest – much tougher !

## Conservation Notes

In the first of a series of notes **Adam Watrobski, Ealing's Conservation Officer** explains all about brickwork.

In the seventeenth century, Sir Christopher Wren wrote *"The Earth about London, rightly managed, will yield as good brick as were the Roman bricks..... and will endure in our air, beyond any stone our Island affords."*

Some three hundred years later, he has indeed been proven correct by the rich and varied heritage of brick buildings that have endured the centuries. Although durable, the apparent robustness of brick belies the care and attention required in manufacture, detailing and maintenance.



Repeated wetting and drying tends to draw out soluble salts from within bricks.

These then crystallize just below the surface, exerting considerable pressure that causes the face of the brickwork to crumble or 'spall'. Frost action can have a similar effect.

Where it is essential to replace bricks, the new must be carefully matched to the old in colour, texture and durability. Professional advice is essential here and the services of a brick factor may well be required. The local builders' merchant will definitely not do. Bricks must also be imperial (nearly half an inch longer than metric) and for larger areas of work careful regard should be had to the bond i.e. the pattern formed by the bricks.

Details, such as tiled creasings and 'specials' (i.e. shaped bricks cast

specially for plinths, string courses and the like), must be faithfully reproduced. Single bricks can sometimes be cut out and turned around, although this is unreliable. Any excess lime mortar can be easily cleaned off. Small-scale damage relative to single bricks can, subject to condition, be 'faced-up' in lime mortar coloured to match, although this is really a conservator's job.

Most brickwork up until the First World War was laid in lime mortar. This is made up with lime putty and sand, very definitely without cement. Such a mortar is less durable and more porous than the surrounding brickwork. This encourages evaporation to occur through the joints rather than through the bricks themselves. The damage caused by crystallization or freezing within the mortar joint – or indeed, in a render – is less serious as the mortar is considered to be sacrificial and is easily replaceable.

Cement based mortars commonly used in modern repointing demonstrate the complete opposite. Being denser and less porous than lime, they force the moisture to evaporate through the face of the brickwork with the disastrous consequences outlined above. The increased water content also reduces the thermal performance of the wall and can encourage damp related problems such as timber decay. Repointing is often completely unnecessary and based only on the erroneous idea that the existing mortar is 'soft' and therefore lets the water in. Where repointing is required (and this should be subject to professional assessment), it is essential to match the new mortar to the old and having the existing analyzed best does this. Regard must also be had to the texture and profile of the finished

pointing as this can completely change the appearance of the surrounding brickwork.

Modern walls built with cement mortar are relatively rigid, often need to incorporate expansion joints and certainly need firm foundations. Traditionally built masonry walls work in a different way. The lime mortar permits flexibility and will accommodate a surprisingly large amount of structural movement by minute adjustment over many joints. It is this movement that is an essential component of the patina of age, one of the many characteristics to be taken into account in the conservation of traditional buildings. Any hairline cracks in lime mortar are self-sealing. The use of hard cement mortar in repairs and repointing can also affect this flexibility. A hard skin will be created to the depth of the repointing only and subsequent movement will induce cracking in the mortar and possibly in the bricks. Water can thus enter but not escape easily – again, only through the surface of the bricks. Components such as ‘stone’ cills will be locked rigid and thus crack at their weakest point. This often shows as a vertical crack in the centre.

The scope of this short article is necessarily limited and I have only touched on some of the aspects of brickwork conservation. Despite its robust reputation, the survival of traditional brickwork will only be assured by the use of appropriate materials applied with philosophical understanding and technical competency. I encourage you all to take professional advice before undertaking any brickwork repairs to your Brentham houses.

**Adam Watrobski**

## Farewell to an old friend

Many local residents came together at St Barnabas Church on June 4<sup>th</sup> to bid farewell to Madge (Marjory) Mitcham, a



resident of the Brentham Estate for over 85 years. Madge's parents, Eric and Connie Mitcham, were the first tenants of 15 Ludlow Road and Madge was their third child, born just before the First World War, in

April 1914, and she and her brother Jack, and sisters Molly and Vera spent all their childhood hours down at the club. All were gifted at ball games, and Madge was the most gifted. She remained living with her mother in Ludlow Road until 1953, when they both moved to separate flats in Holyoake House. My aunt was to remain there until two years ago, when increasing dependency led her to accept a place in a residential home in Banstead run by her old shipping company Port Line (now Cunard). But her heart was in Brentham and she came back as nearby as was possible. A pleasure in this last year was to be able to go back to the Club where she always enjoyed a warm welcome from friends from bowls and tennis days. Madge was something of a legend at the club, having in her time won over fifty tennis titles – a record that has still to be broken! After giving up tennis, she concentrated her formidable ball skills on bowls. She always took a keen interest in local affairs, and just before she left Holyoake House, recorded her reminiscences of the area, and particularly of the club, for the Brentham Book and the Gunnersbury Museum Archive.

**Claudine McCreadie**

**OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND**

Once again Clive Hicks has kindly agreed to lead walks around the estate as part of Open House Weekend 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September. These walks are an excellent opportunity to learn about our estate, particularly for new residents, (and for longer-term residents too!)

**Meet on Vivian Green @ 10-30am**



Don't forget – if you'd like to join a short Sunday morning cycle

**George Barnes ☎ 8997-8327**

**AGM**

**Thursday, 18th October 2001: 8pm**  
St. Barnabas' Millennium Hall,  
Pitshanger Lane

Nominations for membership of the Committee should reach Nicky Cadisch at 123 Fowlers Walk by 11th October.

The AGM will follow a talk by our guest speaker, Professor Sir Peter Hall.

Photomap will be on display

Refreshments will be served.

**Gunnersbury Museum**  
**Brentham Exhibition**

starts

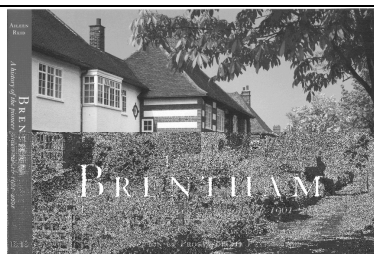
**22<sup>nd</sup> October 2001**

**For Sale**

**Looking for a Brentham Home**

Original bedroom fireplace in unrestored condition, available (for Brentham home *only* please), offers of donation to Brentham Society in excess of £50.

**Contact Bevan Jones ☎: 020-8998-9978**  
or e-mail: [bevansue@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:bevansue@globalnet.co.uk)



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Alan Henderson ☎ **8998 6550**  
or Pitshanger Bookshop.

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