



# BRENTHAM NEWS ISSUE 161 SEPTEMBER 2007

(Distributed to residents and friends of Brentham)

## Brentham Society Chair's Notes

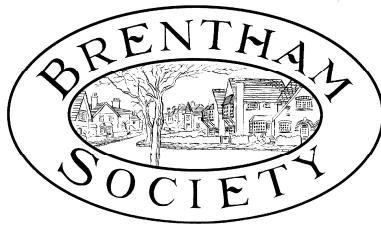
This is my last set of notes for *Brentham News*, as at the AGM I will have come to the end of my three-year term as Chairman. Seeking inspiration, I looked back at the last notes of my predecessor, Sue Elliot, and was struck by how much things have changed, but how much is nevertheless familiar!

In 2004, a major issue was the development of the Brentham Club; this year has at last seen approval of the planning application (albeit much modified from the original ideas) and the start of work on internal refurbishment. A joint group with the PCA is looking at how we can continue to forward our mutual interests in the Club and its buildings.

Not surprisingly, planning and conservation has been a constant theme. It took three years from the start of discussions between the Conservation Panel, the Council's Conservation Officers and ourselves for the revised Article 4 Direction to be concluded. We do now have clear restrictions on, amongst other things, surfacing in front gardens, including new hard standing, paths, patios and other paving or non-porous finishes.

Many issues, however, remain. The Council's inability to deal consistently with planning controls is a constant frustration. The street lighting replacement saga, which began in 2001, is still unresolved. So too is the question of appropriate traffic management throughout Pitshanger. I hope to remain on the committee to help the new Chair work with the PCA on these issues.

Tony Miller,  8997 6042



Annual General Meeting,  
Brentham Society & Brentham  
Heritage Society  
Thursday 18th October 2007,  
7.30pm  
Brentham Club, Meadvale Road



Nominations to serve on the Committee of either the Brentham Society or the Brentham Heritage Society (seconded by two members of the appropriate society) should be submitted in writing by **4th October** to Pippa Kelly, 19 Denison Road for the **Brentham Society**, or Eleanor Cowie at 76 Brentham Way for the **Brentham Heritage Society**

Before the AGM, Edward Kitchen, formerly of the Victorian Society and now Conservation Officer with Richmond Council, will talk about sustainability in relation to conservation.

Refreshments will be served

*Note that the AGM date differs from that shown in error in the June edition of Brentham News.*

## Audrey Jones recalls the Great Storm and Brentham's response

This autumn marks the twentieth anniversary of the Great Storm of the night of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>



October 1987 which ripped through the south of England, destroying millions of trees from Cornwall to Kent and north into Oxfordshire. Winds of up to a hundred miles an hour took everyone by surprise. After a mild autumn the leaves had not yet fallen and torrential rain made the trees top-heavy, so they were particularly susceptible to the power of the wind. Huge numbers of them were uprooted, leaving gaping holes as they fell on buildings, homes, streets and cars.

Brentham Garden Suburb suffered badly, losing 50 trees, many of which were over 80 years old, having been planted when the estate was first built. Its appearance was changed overnight, with some areas made temporarily impassable. Brentham Way in particular (pictured below) was littered with a dozen or more fallen lime trees. People were walking around in a daze, waiting for smashed cars to be towed away and for the council to send in chainsaws to clear the streets. As it happened I had recently moved back to Brentham and was so looking forward to enjoying the trees again. I wasn't sleeping in the house overnight as there was no bathroom and was staying with a friend in Harrow when the storm struck. It took me nearly two hours to drive from her flat to Brentham as so many roads were impassable.

As the debris was cleared away, Brentham looked denuded and forlorn. Something clearly had to be done. Fortunately the Brentham AGM was being held the following week, and I asked if we could form a working party to get our trees replaced as quickly as possible. A number of Brenthamites came to the first meeting where we planned our campaign. First we would approach the Council to see if they would accept a lump sum of money from residents and start replanting in February/March 1998. We would raise the money by circulating residents to ask for donations, and we would approach Jones & Co., estate agents in Pitshanger Lane, to be our bankers.

They were only too pleased to help, and opened an account to receive donations. We gave them a "thermometer tree" for their shop window, and every morning their staff would colour it in to show how much more had been collected. The sum of £960 was raised within a few days, and by the end of the appeal the total stood at £1,386.

For their part the Council were most helpful and agreed to plant one tree for every £20 raised and to bear the balance of the costs involved. Myself, Barbara Murray, Pat Baxendale and Brian Fallon walked the estate with a representative from the Council's arboricultural department, mapping tree loss and making suggestions for replacements, bearing in mind pavement width, proximity to and the heights of adjacent houses. It was agreed that some of the larger trees should be replaced by two or even three smaller ones. In the event the Council generously planted



a total of 90 trees in exchange for Brentham's contribution of £1,200. We were also able to make a small donation towards replanting the hedges at St. Barnabas Church.

Our aim was to restore the views by framing street entrances, to provide shade, variety of shape and colour, and to shield unsightly street furniture. The selection of trees was made from the Council's own stock, supplemented by saplings bought in from commercial nurseries, and included Himalayan, weeping and paper birch, hornbeam, pillar and crab apple, common and Raywood ash, Caucasian lime, elm, three varieties of maple, Italian alder and broadleaf cockspur thorn. Wherever possible, native species were chosen to complement the architecture and encourage wildlife, but the very high demand for replacement trees in the aftermath of the storm meant that non-native species were also used.

Planting began in February 1988 and residents were asked to "adopt" a tree near their house, water it when necessary and report any damage or signs of disease. As a result our success rate was much higher than normal, and any tree failing to thrive was replaced fairly quickly.

By Easter all the trees were in place and we handed over our cheque to the Mayor, who complimented the Society on a remarkable example of community action and planted the commemorative oak tree at the corner of Brentham Way and Fowlers Walk - a ceremony followed by a hot-cross bun party. The original photos of the event include many Brentham children, 5- to 10-year-olds who will now be aged 25 to 30. Where are you now, I wonder?

I compiled an illustrated history of Brentham's experience of the great storm and its aftermath. Every year I take a few more photographs to chart the trees' progress. The volume will be on display at the AGM.

*Audrey Jones, 8997 9640*



### **More memories of the Great Storm, contributed by Brentham residents**

Nita Davis recalls how a fallen tree damaged a mains water pipe in North View, leaving her with no supply for five days. But in Brentham Way there was, narrowly, a lucky escape. Gillian Sylvester remembers her neighbour being phoned from across the street in the early hours with the news that a tree was in process of toppling on to his car. He dashed outside and managed to move it out of harm's way just before the tree came crashing down.



North View before and after storm damage

## Brentham Open Gardens Day 2007

Only now do we realise how lucky we were. Sunday, 10th June 2007 was one of those rare beautiful hot summer days! There were 10 open gardens, of which three were first-time openers. It was lovely to wander from garden to garden, chatting to the owners and being amazed at the different and talented ways in which people tend their gardens - lots of us were amazed when we realised that what we thought was another bit to a garden was in fact a mirror! It is interesting to see the variety and combinations of plants people use and also the different-sized gardens - two gardens now combine old allotments, making secret gardens! More and more people are using tropical plants amongst the old favourites and there are quite a few who like to combine this with a bit of vegetable growing.

We had a plant sale again this year, which proved to be a sellout. Thanks to Sally for propagating all those plants. Tea and home-made cake were available as usual in one of the larger gardens, which had a constant stream of visitors who enjoyed sitting in the lovely garden talking to neighbours and friends about what they had seen.

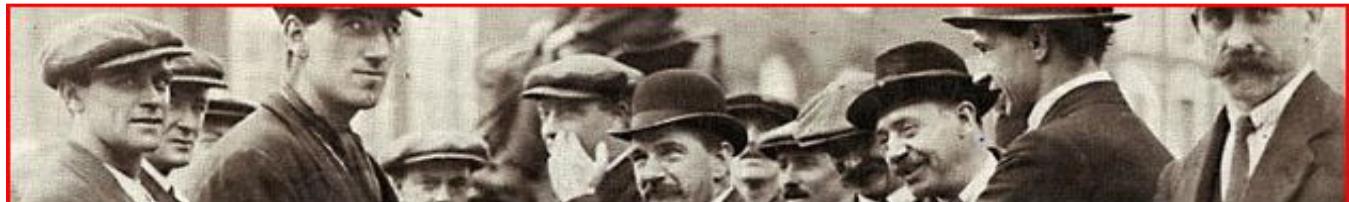
We sold more programmes than ever and this year managed not to run out! All proceeds again went to charity: £700 was raised for Meadow House Hospice, who have sent us a nice thank-you letter. Our thanks also to all those who opened their gardens and to everyone else who made the day, which ended with well-earned drinks and nibbles for all those involved, such a success.

*Carole Fairclough ☎ 8997 7218, & Laura Mackiewicz ☎ 8621 0742*



## Brentham enters the National Directory of Community Archives

[CommunityArchives.org.uk](http://CommunityArchives.org.uk)



Local history enthusiasts may wish to visit [www.communityarchives.org.uk](http://www.communityarchives.org.uk) the national online directory of community archives in the UK. The extensive Brentham Archive was registered there after the Brentham Heritage Society's archivist and secretary both attended a conference at University College London.

The Brentham Archive is the most comprehensive collection in existence of material relating to the history and architecture of Brentham Garden Suburb. Material dates back to the founding of Brentham in 1901 and continues to the present day. Among the considerable riches in the collection are a number of original architects' plans and drawings, some of which are hand-tinted, and several large-format sepia photographs showing Brentham being built between 1901-14. The Archive holds copies of house plans, as well as photographs, slides, videos (including elderly residents' memories of the early days of the estate) and publications.

Among the diverse ephemera in the Archive are Ealing Tenants' rent books and rule books, committee meeting minutes, postcards, newspaper cuttings and a large collection of programmes

and photographs of Brentham May Day - celebrated on the estate every year since 1907. A recent addition is a comprehensive photographic survey of every house and building in the Brentham Garden Suburb Conservation Area. If any readers have anything they think may be of interest to the ever-growing Brentham Archive, please contact Alan Henderson, ☎ 8998 6550.

*Brentham News thanks everyone who responded to the appeal to send in photographs of the Great Storm of 1987. Though only a few could be used in this edition, all are now preserved in the Brentham Archive.*

### Peter Williamson

Peter Williamson, who lived on the Brentham estate for the last 50 years, died last month at the age of 94 in Central Middlesex Hospital after a long illness. He was a gentle, kind-hearted man of many talents, and a devoted husband and father to his three children.

As a Civil Defence worker during the London Blitz, Peter's tasks included entering bomb-damaged buildings which could be in imminent danger of collapse. He attended London University as a mature student, winning a Gilchrist prize, and after a period in social work his keen interest in people and their problems led him to move into working as a careers adviser. He was also a splendid and inventive storyteller, a great reader and frequenter of museums and art galleries, and enjoyed attending and contributing to discussions at classes run by the Ealing Workers' Educational Association. Peter was also a published poet, whose work appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Independent* and on BBC Radio 3, and his latest poem will appear in the Pitshanger Poets' magazine *Poetry Ealing* this autumn.

In a poem read at his funeral, held on August 31 at St. Barnabas Church, Peter expressed his conviction that our "small light" will defeat the darkness of the grave. One of his former neighbours has recalled another victory to which the Williamsons contributed. Back in the 1960s, after noticing council workmen painting white crosses on many of the trees in Ludlow Road to mark them out for felling, she and Peter's wife immediately marched down to the town hall to protest, undertaking if necessary to chain themselves to the trees to protect them. As a result the trees were spared, and the episode marked the beginning of moves towards having Brentham designated as a conservation area.

Just as *Brentham News* was going to press we also learnt with regret of the death, in a nursing home, of **Anne Rigg**, a long-time resident of Meadvale Road.

### Brentham Family Cycle

We were very lucky this rainy summer to enjoy good weather on Sunday 22 July. Twenty Brenthamites turned out and were shepherded by Alan Henderson (seen here on the right, flanked by young Brendan who competed gamely for pole position) to a well-earned tea at Osterley House and then safely back to Pitshanger Park, clocking up a total of around 14 miles.

Thus inspired, some have already signed up for the Hovis London Freewheel, a bike ride through central London to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. The streets will be made car-free for the occasion, which is intended (with the support of Mayor Ken Livingstone and Transport for London) to encourage more Londoners to use bikes. Why not join in? You'll need first however to log on to [www.londonfreewheel.com](http://www.londonfreewheel.com) and register for the ride.



## Still time to enter our trees competition!

As notified in the August Update of *Brentham News*, to mark this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Storm Audrey Jones is offering a prize for artwork celebrating a Brentham tree. The competition is open to all residents, especially children, and entries can be a photograph, drawing, painting, poem or similar piece of creative work. There will be a display at the Brentham AGM and the winner will receive a sapling to plant. Entries to be posted to the Editor (address at the foot of this page) to arrive by 8th October. Note that, in the curious absence of a street-door letterbox at that address, deliveries by hand may be difficult unless you phone beforehand.

### Sponsor's Advertisement

## GRIMSHAW



Grimshaw & Co recently handled the sale of this charming, character Edwardian house in Brentham Way.

If you are considering a sale, why not reap the benefit of our extensive local experience and vigorous marketing? The agents for your area, we always have a large register of waiting applicants willing to pay a full market price for a suitable property.

**For a market appraisal  
please telephone  
Derek Grimshaw FRICS  
or  
John Pridham RD FRICS  
8992 5661**

### Dates for your Diary

Saturday 15 September	London Open House Weekend, & 16 September	guided walks around Brentham
Sunday 23 September	London Freewheel	
Sunday 30 September	Carvery at the Brentham Club	
Thursday 18 October	Annual General Meetings of Brentham Society & BHS	
December (date TBA)	Carol singing	

If you are thinking of making alterations to your home or need guidance on any aspect of planning and conservation, contact Heather Moore for an informal discussion, ☎ 8998 0234, or contact Ealing Planning Department, ☎ 8825 6600

### Brentham Club

To celebrate the re-opening of the newly decorated and refurbished hall at the Brentham Club, chef Neil Lefevre will serve a two-course roast Carvery on Sunday 30th September from 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm, with a second sitting from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm. Price per head is £8.50. Everyone is welcome and early booking is advised on 020 8997 2634.

Articles and pictures appearing in *Brentham News* may also be posted on the Brentham website [www.brentham.com](http://www.brentham.com) so contributors are asked to let the Editor know when submitting copy if they would prefer this not to happen.

Ealing Art Group's 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual Exhibition & Sale of art and craft will be held for the second time at the prestigious PM Gallery, Pitzhanger Manor, Mattock Lane, Ealing W5. Opening times are: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1-5 pm; Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1-9 pm; Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September, 11 am-5 pm; Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1-4 pm

*Are there other local events or activities you know of which might interest other Brentham residents? If so, you are very welcome to submit them for inclusion, if space permits and at the Editor's discretion, in a future *Brentham News*, the next full edition of which will appear early in 2008.*

