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DISTRIBUTED TO RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF BRENTHAM GARDEN SUBURB
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BRENTHAM NEWS

Chair's Notes

Welcome to Brentham News.

We often think that conservation means that things don't change, but this isn't true. Recently I was looking at a photograph of Brentham Way taken about 30 years ago, and there were quite a few differences. The one that surprised me most was that the hedges were much lower than they are today.

John Kelly explores the subject of change more thoroughly later in this BN, but it did get me thinking again about the difference between preservation and conservation. The Brentham Society supports conservation, preferring to support changes that reflect modern life providing they don't change the overall nature of the estate. Over the past few years, the most obvious change has been in the number of loft extensions, but there are other examples as well.

An estate like ours has to change to reflect modern life, or it will wither and die. However, we need to be vigilant that these changes do not affect the overall look and feel. Residents may believe that the change that they desire would not have an effect, but if other residents copy this, incremental damage may occur.

On top of this danger, we now have a more serious threat to our conservation area. The Birmingham Post is reporting that Birmingham City Council has been forced to scrap several conservation areas because it cannot continue to enforce regulations within them, and a further six areas are also deemed to be "at risk". They include the historic Austin Village built for car workers at Longbridge.

As an economy measure, Birmingham Council has reduced the number of conservation officers from 7 to 2, and they are unable to cope with the workload. Ealing's conservation officer post has also been reduced to part-time status (she works on other projects for the rest of the time), and similar strains are showing here.

This is my last Notes as Chair, as I will be stepping down from the role at the AGM in October.

The Brentham Society constitution requires the post of Chair to be for a fixed term only, to allow for new blood and new thinking.

I have enjoyed my 5 years in this position, and will continue to work with BS in the future. The new Chair will be announced at the AGM. Many thanks to all who have supported me during these past years.

Richard Costella

Strawberry Tea

For the past 30 years this event has been held very successfully in Barbara Murray's garden so there was a lot to live up to this year when it moved to the garden of Allison and Matthew McAllister, at the top of Brentham Way.



But there was no need to worry. They organised a most convivial afternoon - even the sun shone as if in approval. The event was enjoyed by more than 40 residents and friends including Ealing's Mayor, local councillors and MPs Rupa Huq and Stephen Pound.

Is Brentham Becoming Gentrified?

Gentrification is a general term for the arrival of wealthier people into an existing urban district, a related increase in rents and property values, and changes in the district's character and culture. To some extent this definition could be applied to what is happening on our estate but not in the sense that the more affluent are moving into a run-down area, but more because it is a pleasant leafy suburb with open spaces, good local shopping and good primary schools. However if these are the only motives for coming here then there is the possibility that there could be adverse effects on the conservation status of this garden suburb.

The danger lies in a lessening appreciation of the idea that brought Brentham into existence – that of creating a community with a shared sense of its aims and amenities, as part of the co-partnership movement.

The results could show up in various ways and some could be said to be already happening, for example:

Properties being sold for 'buy-to-let' and let out on short term tenancies. This can result in tenants not having time to feel part of the community.

The prevalence of hedges being allowed to grow very tall. At the front it spoils the street scene by obscuring gardens and frontage elevations, while tall hedges at the rear prevent neighbourly chats over them - reducing the opportunity for community interaction.



Sociability was the key to both the architecture and layout of Brentham.

The charm of the Arts and Crafts style derived from several factors - the modest scale, the low hedges providing a uniform boundary to each block, the gently curving street patterns and the absence of long rear extensions to get between you and your neighbour.

In several places, the houses are arranged in groups that partly enclose a community space, most notably in Winscombe Crescent.



Although house details and layout vary across the estate, many form terraces or groups where alterations to one house can be detrimental to the overall harmony.

Many of the houses are designed to back onto a central open space rather than have the back gardens abutting onto one another. These 'backlands' were intended for community use, such as for allotments or more general amenity. These are no longer under estate management and have been sold to house owners for private use and are no longer available for community access.

It all adds up to the importance of maintaining a strong community spirit in our estate. If it declines into an individualist society then there is a real possibility that Brentham as we know it will cease to exist.

However for most of us Brentham still remains a friendly place in which to live.

John Kelly

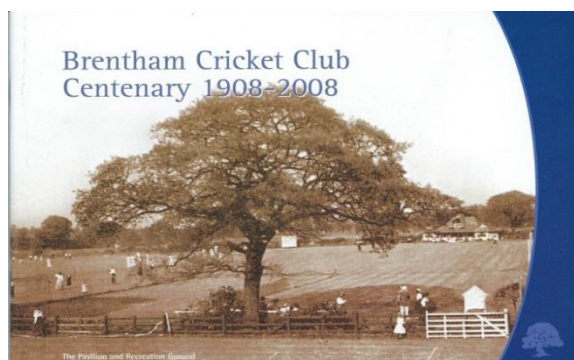
Controlled Parking Zones

As noted in the last BN, the spectre of CPZs has returned to haunt Pitshanger and Brentham. The Council has included the areas in their 3 year plan. Despite this, the Cleveland Ward Councillors have categorically stated that they have no intention to allow CPZs to be imposed on the area. However, these areas are quite large, so if a group of residents outside our estate request one, a consultation will have to be held. We need to be vigilant to make sure that we all respond to any consultation that occurs, making our views felt forcefully.

Brentham Cricket Archive

While the Brentham Society has an extensive archive of photos and documents covering the life of the estate and the Brentham Club (formerly the Brentham Institute), cricket fans have had to look elsewhere for their history.

Now the **Brentham Cricket Club** is collating and cataloguing their collection of memorabilia including fixture cards, posters and team photos. The club was founded in 1908 so there's a rich and extensive assortment of material.



One poster announces a charity match against the British Empire XI in 1943 which brought many well-known players of the day to Brentham and raised substantial sums for the Red Cross.

Much of the material is included in a commemorative booklet and can be seen online at www.brenthamcc.co.uk/history

It's hoped that when storage space allows, the collection will be united with the rest of the Brentham Society's archive.

Meanwhile the Cricket Club is keen to recruit new members. If you are interested, contact secretary Paul Whelan on 07814 835266.



**9-11 September and
16-18 September**

This September there's a chance to enjoy the work of some of Ealing's many artists when the studios and homes along Ealing's first Art Trail open their doors. Several of the artists taking part are Brentham residents and local art groups are well represented. The full list of venues can be found at www.ealingbeat.org or in the booklet available from the Pitshanger Lane library, Pitshanger Bookshop, the Brentham Club, and all venues on the day. Two Art Groups which meet at the Brentham Club will be showing work at separate locations.

The Tuesday Morning Group will have a display at the Cinnamon Café, while the Tuesday Afternoon Group show is at the Club itself. Two other local artists, Celia Busby and Sally Kelly, will display their work at Sally's home at 2 Ruskin Gardens.

Celia has been painting for much of her life and works in a range of different media depending on her subject. Her favourite subjects include buildings, landscapes, sunsets but she's developed a special talent for flowers. "I paint flowers in what I'd call horticultural style, very faithfully, very realistically, although I don't measure, or do the roots, as a botanical artist would. I only paint from real flowers, never from photographs, so I could be sitting in the garden, feet in the flower bed or using picked flowers indoors, and I do them in watercolours.



Celia Busby

"Buildings I'm more likely to do in pen and ink, or pen and wash, with sunsets looking best in pastels. Then sometimes I use acrylics, which are water-based, like oils on canvas".

Sally takes a different approach. "I don't find it easy to work from something that's in front of me, I have to have some idea in my head that involves imagination". Her real passion for her art started later in life when she took up embroidery. Now she also uses paper collage. This involves preparing specially painted patterns on thin card and then cutting up pieces to use in the assembly of delicate small-scale pictures. She uses a similar technique with embroidered pieces.

With a general idea of the final picture, Sally begins with a variety of fabric pieces and then adds stitching for the detail, building up the design as she goes along.

While Sally mostly works from home, Celia goes regularly to the local Art Group at the Brentham Club for one main reason. "It makes you sit down and do it! If you're at home there's always a reason you shouldn't be doing it. There are too many distractions."

Painting gives Celia a lot of pleasure – especially when the picture works out – but she says it can also be frustrating. "I paint over quite a few canvases when they haven't worked out!" she admits.



Sally Kelly

For Sally, her embroidery uses a creative part of the brain that she finds very satisfying. "It always gives me a good night's sleep - and also keeps my hands busy when I'm watching television!"

Both Sally and Celia believe the Borough of Ealing Art Trail will help to raise awareness of the wide range of artistic talent to be found in the borough.

Other Brentham artists will be represented on the Art Trail; their work will be included in the Art Group shows at the Cinnamon Café and The Brentham Club.



St Barnabas Flower Show

There'll be a colourful range of displays at St Barnabas Church as part of their centenary celebrations. The Flower Festival – also a stop on the Ealing Art Trail – launches on 15th September with a special preview.

Tickets are £8 to include cheese and wine, available from the Parish office or Anne Hamerton on 020 8998 0236. The festival then offers free entrance until 18th September. Also on the 18th is the Harvest Festival.

Tower Restoration Project

At the time of the last Brentham News, the whole Tower project was on hold, owing to the major upheaval in the running of the Club. Since then, several new committee members have been appointed, including myself. The committee has begun to understand and address the financial difficulties of the Club and it is very clear that there is no money to contribute to the Tower fund. As a result, we scaled back the project significantly, to the point where the money we have raised will cover the cost. This limits the scope of the work to the top two floors of the Tower. It's a big reduction, but does still include the most damaged parts of the structure – namely the windows at the top. It also means that future work will only require scaffolding at a low level.

We then ran into difficulties with our builders – Mitre – over the nature of the scaffolding to be erected. Unfortunately the shape of the roof is such that poles cannot be rested directly on to the ground, and the job specification clearly states that neither must they rest on the existing roof. Some serious talks ensued, a structural engineer was appointed and a way was found to build the scaffolding, but at an additional cost of £4,100 - which we did not have.



Fortunately, a generous Club member – who wishes to remain anonymous – has offered to donate this amount to the fund, thus saving the project. So at the time of writing, we are putting together the final contract to be signed as soon as possible, allowing work to start – probably in October. Fingers crossed.

Clive Evans

Brentham Tours Help Tower Fund

There's a continuing fascination for Brentham judging by the number of visitors and guided walks we've done recently.

In July, Clive Evans and Alan Henderson shepherded 105 children from North Ealing School around the estate and gave out souvenir postcards and leaflets.

Some of the tours contribute useful sums to the Tower Fund. Three guided walks with visitors from all over the London area, led by Clive and Sue Elliott, netted £764 for the fund. Meanwhile, in the Greenredeem race for funds, we came second, after the Selbourne Society, but we still received £750. Thanks to all who clicked on our behalf. With a further donation of £250, the total raised since the last Brentham News is £1,764.

And a reminder that **Open House Weekend** is on 17th and 18th September, when Clive is in action again. His walks around Brentham are free and start from the Club at 10.30 am on both days.

Summer Front Garden Awards

The Front Gardens Committee has been out enjoying the sun and looking at all the Brentham front gardens in the full bloom of summer. We enjoyed seeing the variety of displays from blowsy perennials to brightly-coloured bedding plants. We were not so happy with the advent of the dreaded wheelie bins which have appeared in a number of front gardens! We hope that they will be less visible in due course as we all get used to accommodating them.

The gardens shortlisted for the Summer Award are:

38 Fowlers Walk, 48 Fowlers Walk, 30 Brunner Road, 7 Meadvale Road, 15 Meadvale Road, 26 Ludlow Road, 38 Holyoake Walk and 58 Holyoake Walk.



Well done to everyone!

The Committee will be out judging again at the end of September prior to the announcement of the winners at the AGM in October.

Vicky Snodin

Annual General Meeting

The Brentham Society AGM will be held on 20th October at the Club. Any nominations for new committee members should be submitted to the secretary Ann Wolf by 6th October.

Email: secretary@brentham.com

Membership Reminder

A reminder for any residents who may not have got round to paying their Brentham Society subscription (£5 for the year) - it can still be paid to our membership secretary Mike Gandon at 73 Brentham Way.

Planning Improvements?

Almost all alterations to the outside of your property are controlled and require planning consent. Save time and trouble by seeking advice from planning@brentham.com.

Welcome Pack Update

The information sheets given to new residents have been updated and are now available to anyone in Brentham.

They include a re-issued version of a self-guided walk around the estate, lists of our merchandise, useful contacts, and advice on caring for your home.

Pitshanger Pictures

September films in St Barnabas Millennium Hall.

10th at 8 pm: **Chick Lit** (15) Comedy about four male friends who decide to write a chick-lit novel to help save their local pub.

11th at 7 pm: **Don Carlo** (E) Verdi's grand opera of jealousy, rebellion and back-stabbing at the court of King Phillip II.

12th at 8 pm: **Paradis + Harold & Maud** (15) A sex-comedy double bill. A new short film, whose director will attend, and a real classic.

26th at 8 pm : **The Scent of Green Papaya** (U) A ravishing film set in Saigon in 1951.

28th at 8.15 pm: **It's a Life!** (E) Documentary of a bohemian family on a Thames sailing barge at Chiswick. Director Denis Postle will attend.



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The Brentham Club

The Brentham Club provides facilities for bowls, football, tennis and cricket. Indoors, there's bridge, darts and snooker, along with Weightwatchers, Pilates, Yoga and art classes. Managed mainly by volunteers, the club is also a welcoming place to eat & drink - in the thriving bar and café - where Sunday lunches are a speciality.

Fred Perry Café - Opening Hours

Mon to Thurs – 10am to 5pm for drinks/snacks
and sandwiches

Fri to Sat - 10am to 5pm for hot meals and
specials

Sun - 10 am to 4pm for hot meals, & roast
dinner

Please call 020 8997 2624 to book ahead.

Every Friday, food is available in the Top Bar
between 7 and 9pm.

Forthcoming Events

Quiz nights – dates are 23 Sept, 28 Oct, 25 Nov and
16 Dec. Just come along and join a team or bring
your own team. Contact the club to book a table.

FIREWORKS NIGHT - our big event of the year is
on Saturday 5th November.

Doors open 6pm, display starts 7.30pm

As usual - beer tent and mulled wine.

Lots of children's entertainment – including Bouncy
Castle, Disco, Coconut Shy and much more.

Come and watch live sports from BT Sport, SKY Sports and ESPN.

For details of events, classes and other enquiries, phone the Club on 020 8997 2624,

email secretary@brenthamclub.co.uk or go to www.brenthamclub.co.uk

For hall/room hire, contact John Capps on 07402 711982

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