



ISSUE 195 ~ JUNE 2019

DISTRIBUTED TO RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF BRENTHAM GARDEN SUBURB  
BY THE BRENTHAM SOCIETY - REGISTERED CHARITY NO.1079724

# BRENTHAM NEWS

## Chair's Notes

One of the important events in the Brentham Society calendar is our AGM.

It's where residents have the opportunity to get together and discuss issues relevant to us all.

This year our speaker was Robert Hewison – renowned cultural historian and leading international authority on John Ruskin. He gave us a thought-provoking talk on Ruskin and William Morris, revealing how their approach to philosophy, design and architecture influenced the founders of Brentham. Evidence of that influence survives in many architectural details and of course in the name of Ruskin Gardens. His academic talk sparked a lot of interest and questions.

Robert reminded us that 2019 is the bicentenary of Ruskin's birth, with a number of events taking place. Details can be found at [www.ruskinto-day.org](http://www.ruskinto-day.org)



Gina Mallin & Robert Hewison

The meeting also raised some points of interest concerning our estate, including our twittens and how we should manage these vital pathways in line with their Conservation status. We need to bear in mind that retaining access to our backlands is vital to the high level of protection that Article 4 Direction provides.

The Society will follow through with a working group on twittens once we have the outcome of Ealing Council's 10-year Conservation Management Review, which is still underway.

Meanwhile, parties of volunteers are encouraged to keep twittens cleaned up, and Committee members are always happy to support residents who might need help managing their hedges alongside any of the twittens.

The minutes of the AGM can be found on the Brentham

website, and anyone who cannot access the internet and would like a paper copy should phone Maggie Bukowska on 0208 998 9616.

On another note entirely, I had personal cause to consult our Brentham bee expert, Donal McGinty. A new hive of honey bees seemed to have taken up residence in my chimney. Lovely to be able to support the endangered bees, but not a healthy place for them to decide to live, and not entirely useful for me having quite a few little frenzied visitors coming down and into the house and then wanting to get out the windows!

But thankfully Donal was able to advise me how to smoke them out. A couple of days later the swarm was discovered on a tree nearby and Donal was able to transfer them to one of his own empty hives.

As we go to press, the drama series that was partly filmed on the Brentham estate, *Summer of Rockets*, is currently airing on BBC2. Watch out for the scenes shot on and around Vivian Green! On our website, there's a picture gallery - and a short video - of the film crew at work.

And so summer has arrived, and with it the delights of some of our most-beloved annual events – Open Gardens Day and the Strawberry Tea.

Finally, it's with great sadness we have to report the death of Geoff Baxendale, a loyal supporter of Brentham and its conservation in so many ways. He was a Brentham committee member right up to the end. Our thoughts are with Pat and the family at this time. We will publish a tribute to Geoff in our next edition of the News.

**Gina Mallin, Chair of The Brentham Society**

## Brentham Open Gardens Day

**Sunday 9th June**

**1.30 - 5 pm**

Go behind the scenes to find a spectacular series of gardens, and a plant sale on Vivian Green.

Tickets available on the day from 13 Brentham Way or on Vivian Green.



## Big Brentham Oak Falls

Within a few seconds on Saturday 4th May a part of the pre-history of Brentham was suddenly gone.



*The giant oak before...*

At about 5.20 pm, in the allotments between Brunner Road and

were playing on a swing hanging from one of the branches. Luckily they had gone back into their house on Woodfield Crescent when the tree fell, thus avoiding what could have been a terrible tragedy.

The Brentham oak's last dance was captured on video by neighbour Anita Sharda minutes before it fell. She says "I didn't anticipate that outcome as I filmed its canopy swirling in the strong winds. It was sad to see the mighty oak fallen. For the last 28 years I could see it from my dining room window and admired its resilience and beauty. It had stood through time and survived many storms. My

scratch and raised their young. It was home to the great spotted woodpecker, seen foraging for insect prey on the ridged oak bark and often producing sounds that could be heard at a distance. On some nights we could hear a little owl singing and named it the Brentham Owl. The parakeets would stop over mid flight on the oak branches as they decided where to fly to next. The magpies and the jackdaws would fight over territory. The squirrels kept themselves busy hiding the acorns in my garden lawn, hence the number of little oak saplings I came across. The Oak tree had many a tale to tell and will be greatly missed."

Sue Elliott, whose house overlooks the tree explains: "This majestic tree was one of the great oaks that marked the original field boundaries before Brentham was built. Another one was almost entirely destroyed in high winds during the 1990s. All that remains of that one is a 20ft stump completely covered in ivy. These oaks are perhaps now coming to the end of their natural lives. Let's hope the last remaining 'giant' on Denison/Ludlow Green (symbol of Brentham itself) has many years of life left. It's hard not to feel emotional about the loss of these trees – like losing a familiar friend".

*Photo: Tony Mackenzie*

Brentham Way there was a terrific vibration as one of the huge Brentham Oaks, around 350 years old, crashed to the ground. The tree had dominated the landscape but now its massive canopy lay across the allotment, reaching into several neighbouring gardens, damaging sheds and a poplar tree.

The owners of the allotment, Alex and Neil Sibley explained that it had been raining, there were gusting winds, and some of the now exposed roots appear to have rotted. Only a few minutes earlier their children

daughter often photographed the oak tree against sunrises and sunsets in different seasons as it stood tall and proud against the landscape. It helped the air quality and reduced noise pollution from the A40. Perhaps we should consider replacing the fallen tree with new oak saplings for future generations and the environment."

The tree was home to a wide variety of birds and animals. Anita watched earlier this year as a crow family moved in for their annual visit. "Each year, they built a nest from



*...and after*



*The roots of the oak*

## Changing Street Lights

The street lighting department of Ealing Council is planning to replace the lanterns that we have in Brentham. The current warm orange coloured lights will be replaced by much more efficient LED lamps. These will give a cooler white light whose brightness can be controlled remotely. The proposal is that at switch on, they would be at full brightness but after 10pm they would be slowly dimmed.

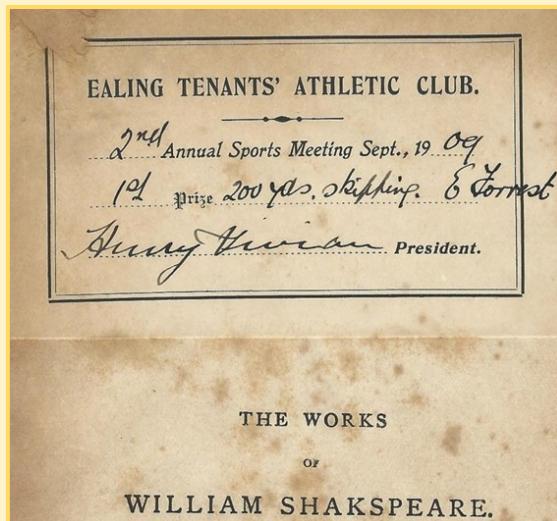
The new LED units cannot be fitted into existing lanterns but the new ones will look identical to the heritage designs we have now - the only difference is within the glass bowl. The LEDs have already been installed on Haven Green.

The plan is to begin installation in Meadvale Road at the west end of the Conservation Area, then work along to Neville Road and then Brunner Road. The council hope to begin work within the next three months.



## From the Archives

John Dunphy of Newton Abbot made contact through our website. He told us that about 30 years ago he bought a second hand copy of The Works of William Shakespeare at a charity shop in Staines. On recently helping his daughter to clear out some of her books he came across it again and noticed inside the front cover an award certificate stating the book was presented as 1st prize by the Ealing Tenants' Athletic Club to an E Forrest at its 2nd annual sports meeting Sept 1909. The certificate attached to the book is signed by the then club president Henry Vivian. John wondered if we could shed any light on what happened to Ealing Tenants' Athletic Club. We explained that it was all part of the sports activities at the Brentham Institute that later became the Club.



We were also able to tell him (from the 1911 census) that prize-winner Ethel Maud Forrest was an 11 year old living at 55 Woodfield Crescent with her parents and two older brothers William Alfred and Percy. This just happens to be the house with the recently lost giant oak behind it (see Page 2). I wonder if Ethel and her brothers ever played on a swing hanging from the tree... John Dunphy thought perhaps we could use the story to promote a skipping race as a fitness-awareness or fundraising event! Any takers?

## An early May Day

Following the article in the last edition of Brentham News, Barbara Sinclair of 25 Neville Road made contact. She was visited recently by a Canadian lady who said her mother Muriel Syndercombe was born in the house in 1909. She brought with her some photos from an old family album including this one of May Day in 1911.

Muriel is the little girl crying her eyes out sitting in the centre of the photo. Muriel's older brother Bert, sitting on the left, won the 'costume contest'.

If you have any old photos of Brentham that you think would be of interest please send them to [archive@brentham.com](mailto:archive@brentham.com)

*Alan Henderson*



## MAY DAY with Isobel & Zoe Spurling

*This edition's report written by our younger residents is by Isobel & Zoe Spurling from Winscombe Crescent. They give us the inside story of May Day.*

I have been part of Brentham May Day for 6 years now. My sister Zoe and I officially started when we were four, but before that I used to walk after the parade in a dress-up costume, longing to be with the older girls. You may have seen the parade walking past your house, but do you know what happens behind the scenes? It's much more than the parade – let us fill you in.

In March we start rehearsals. There are 6 weeks of rehearsals, just 10-15 minutes every Thursday after school to help us learn the maypole dances. It doesn't matter what your day at school has been like, or if you've quarrelled with your brother or sister on the walk down, when you arrive you instantly feel welcome and like you belong.



*Isobel at rehearsals*

During rehearsals we wear school uniform or whatever we like.

But on May Day we dress up which looks a lot better. If you're a girl you'll need a white – hear that white, not off-white or cream – dress, shoes and tights, and flowers in your hair and to carry. Zoe carries a posy, but mine are on a white stick to make arches that everyone skips through. You can buy the flower garlands or make them. We like that our mum makes ours. She usually gets together with our friends' mums and they make them, chatting and drinking wine. Boys wear costumes – there are soldiers, sailors and even a chimney sweep with a coal-smudged face.

On the day itself, which by the way is never May Day but a weekend afterwards, the roads are closed just for us which makes it feel important. The band starts playing and we set off excitedly. At the front of the parade you'll spot a green man. He looks like a walking hedge with trainers, and he sheds leaves along the road which we have to step over.

Friends and family line the pavements – some ran to us with umbrellas this year – and took photos of course. I feel special and loved, and smile and wave to the people I know. We walk around in partners. Mine was Anna who I know from Brownies. We chatted non-stop. The walk is longer than it looks, and chatting stops me getting tired. Normally at least two people lose shoes, which get hurriedly retrieved, and we all stop and wait for them to catch up. The music keeps playing, louder than before as we are closer to the band, and we soon move on again.

The parade starts and finishes at the Brentham Club, and is followed by our dancing. In good weather we dance around the maypole in a grassy field, but that's not always the case. Last year it was raining so hard we danced in St Barnabas Church. This year I did wonder if we'd be able to dance outside as during the parade we were drenched. But the sun came

out, and we all got to do our dances.



*Zoe & friend Elyse prepare for the Parade*



*Isobel dances with May Queens*

The 4 and 5 year olds are so cute as they skip around holding a green or yellow ribbon. As you get older the patterns you make around the maypole get more complex.

I also do country dancing at the end with friends from other years which takes more practice but is fun.

This year I was paired with Molly, a former May Queen who was double my height – and I loved dancing with her and the other May Queens. They're so kind and friendly.



Isobel at the 'no-parents-allowed' party

Soon it's time for the feast! In my opinion the 'no-parents-allowed' feast is the best part of May Day. You see, after the May Queen has made her speech and everyone has finished dancing, we all go inside where we eat a marvellous meal. It's a tea of crisps, popcorn, cakes and more. So healthy! Our May Queen Juliet made a lovely speech, we gave her three cheers and giggled, talked and munched. The whole room was a bubble of laughter and celebration.

If you're interested in joining us next year, here are Zoe's top tips:

- Wear comfortable shoes you can definitely skip in
- Walk in the middle of the road and make sure you don't fall behind
- Chat with your friends as you walk – it makes it more fun
- When voting for the May Queen, don't follow your friends, choose for yourself
- Don't concentrate on the parents, they may make you feel nervous and put you off

May Day wouldn't be possible without a stupendous team of volunteers.

Thank you to them all.



## Find Us on Facebook

In addition to our website, Brentham Garden Suburb now has a Facebook Group. Community Events will be posted here so you can be sure never to miss anything. Group members can also post pictures and join in discussions.

We hope this will provide a useful and collaborative resource for current residents and also be informative for prospective residents. The group is a "public" group which means Facebook users can search for the group page and read the posts. If you would like to add your comments and pictures then please don't forget to join the group, this is also a great way of being kept up to date with all things Brentham! ☺

**Jo Bradley**



## History of a House

Would you be interested in the history of your house on the Brentham Estate? I am a local resident, living in North View, who has worked as a buildings historian and historical researcher since 1999, employed by a heritage consultancy. I visit national and local archives in search of records such as photographs, illustrations, architects' plans and street directories to document the history of homes of all periods in and around London, including listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas. I moved to Brentham three years ago and find the social and architectural history of the estate fascinating.

I have prepared 'histories of homes' for friends as wedding or house-warming gifts in the form of A4 bound 24 page booklets. These include historical maps showing the development of the area and alterations to properties; images from postcards and newspaper cuttings; bomb maps that illustrate any WWII damage; and census entries suggesting the type of family and employment of the first residents of dwellings.

Brentham's archive is a rich source of material which could be invaluable in researching homes on the estate. So please do let me know if you might be interested in a small bound booklet on the history of your home. I would be happy to show examples of what I have completed so far.

**Chiara Vittucci 07903 085 579 chiara.vittucci@gmail.com**

## Spring Gardens Award



1 Ruskin Gardens

The winner will be announced at the AGM next March.

Looking for inspiration for your front garden? Try [www.gardenersworld.com](http://www.gardenersworld.com). There is an article showing how to beautify even the smallest space including how to hide the dreaded recycling bins! Well worth a look.

Recently I went away for a week and came back to find a set of dead box plants. I advise taking preventative measures before it is too late! (See Page 7)

We're hoping to see some re-vamped front gardens when the judges tour the estate in July. We're always on the lookout for new gardens to add to our list.

**Vicky Snodin**



80 Meadvale Road

## Airport Expansion



**A**t a recent consultation event we went to find out what the possible impact of Heathrow expansion would have on Brentham.

The answer, it turns out, is not simple. Firstly, even without the third runway, there's a plan for more frequent landings at the airport. This is because

more accurate control of approach paths guided by

GPS will allow simultaneous landings on both north & south runways. However we will not be greatly affected because currently approaches do not normally overfly Brentham. The frequency of take-offs, which do affect us, should not change.

If the third runway gets built, then it's a different story. Frequency of take-offs will increase and more convoluted approach paths will be devised to allow for more frequent landings. Some of these may get close to Brentham.

A submission has been made to the commission, pointing out that Brentham is a special peaceful place and if possible, we'd be grateful if planes, whether landing or taking-off, would avoid the area!

## Fred Perry at the Brentham Club

**F**red Perry, one of Britain's greatest ever sportsmen, was a member of The Brentham Club. He won the Gentleman's Singles at Brentham prior to winning three consecutive Wimbledon titles. Excitingly, the company he founded wants to celebrate this heritage by forming a partnership with the Club. There will be The Fred Perry Championship, a new annual tennis tournament backed by the LTA. Also, the club's café, will become the Fred Perry Café with new furnishings, including the addition of memorabilia, celebrating the link between Fred Perry and The Brentham Club.



## In Brief

- Membership** - A reminder for those who have not yet paid this year's £5 Brentham Society subscription. It can be paid (along with any donation you wish to make) to Mike Gandon at 73 Brentham Way. Subs can also be paid online by BACS - known as Faster Payments - to CAF bank, Brentham Society account, Sort Code: 40-52-40 A/C No: 00019660. Please include house number and street in the payee reference.
- Brentham resident James Rowlands**, who sits on the Conservation Area Advisory Panel, is a designer & fabricator. He is responsible for a fascinating exhibition: *Britain's Cold War Revealed*, running at the National Archives, Kew until November. It features documents and artifacts that tell the story of Britain's Cold War and is well worth a visit.
- BEAT - Ealing's Annual Art Event** returns in the first weekend in September. Keep an eye out for several Brentham artists who will be displaying their work.

### The Rise of the Box Tree Caterpillar

*Last September we mentioned how this destructive bug is spreading across the South East. It's now widespread and is about as welcome as rain on May Day. Brentham resident Mary Rehman has first hand experience.*



It took me 5 years to establish my lovely neat box hedge at the front of my house and only two weeks for all 36 plants to be decimated by the box moth caterpillar.

My advice is examine your plants thoroughly and remove any webbing and caterpillars at the first sight of them. Get spraying them early and feeding with bone meal. Lastly, if cutting out any affected areas, wash your garden tools and shears in a mild disinfectant to prevent spreading to healthy plants. Even with all that I'm not convinced anyone in this area will have any box hedge left in a couple of years, sadly.

I let my hedge grow until it was 2 ft high and was hoping to keep it this height: high enough to stop animals wandering in, but not shade the lawn.

During April, I noticed brown leaves appearing and thought it might be 'box blight'. But within days, I saw a

sticky web appearing which spread from one plant to the next. Then the leaves started disappearing rapidly. By the time I'd realised it was the work of the box tree caterpillar it was too late. There were simply hundreds and hundreds of them on each plant.

At first I asked the children to try to pick them all off; after some time, they'd covered two of the 36 plants, and given up.

I then tried an organic bug spray but the sticky web they create prevents the spray getting to them or their eggs. I had to accept that the box moth caterpillar had beaten me and my only option was to cut down the hedge.

Now I can either move these plants to the back of the garden to see if they re-grow (unlikely) or plant a new hedge of something more resistant such as Euonymous or the good old fall-back, privet.

The RHS site is collecting information on the box tree caterpillar and, if you've had the same problem, it would help to complete their 2 minute survey found here:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=760>



Screenings are in St Barnabas Millennium Hall.

9 June	<b>Il Barbiere di Seviglia</b> (E)	7 pm (supper 6pm)
12 June	<b>TT: Closer to the Edge</b> (15)	8.15 pm
15 June	<b>Mama Mia &amp; Mama Mia: Here we go Again</b> (PG)	6.30 pm
19 June	<b>The Glenn Miller Story</b> (U)	2 pm in Church
3 July	<b>Green Book</b> (15)	8.15 pm
14 July	<b>Opera: Pique Dame</b> (E)	7 pm
17 July	<b>Seven Brides for Seven Brothers</b>	2 pm in Church
1 - 4 Aug	<b>Verdi Festival: La Traviata, Il Trovatore, Don Carlos, Rigoletto in Mantua</b>	all at 7pm

### Strawberry Tea

Sunday 23rd June 3.30 pm

#### 6 Brentham Way

This year we are very grateful to Matthew and Allison McAllister for hosting this traditional Brentham event in their delightful garden.



Open to Brentham Society members and their guests, tickets on the gate.

Children are welcome.

# GRIMSHAW

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## THE BRENTHAM CLUB



As well as boasting excellent sporting facilities (Tennis, Cricket, Football, Bowls, Bridge, Snooker), the Club offers many social events – Comedy Nights, Open Mic Nights and Quizzes to name but a few (see below).

And the exciting news is that The Brentham Club is now licensed to hold weddings and civil ceremonies in our Grade II-listed clubhouse and in our extensive grounds. Our unique location provides a perfect backdrop for your wedding celebration. For more information and friendly advice, contact the club.

### WHAT'S ON ... at a glance

Saturday 8 June

**STRAIGHT SIX** – Blend of up-tempo Blues Rock

8.00 pm Top Bar (free event)

Friday 14 June

**OPEN MIC** – 8.00 pm, Top Bar (free event)

Friday 21 June

**COMEDY NIGHT** – 8.00 pm, Hall\*

Saturday 22 June

**COCKTAIL PARTY** – Terrace\*

\*See website for details: [www.brenthamclub.co.uk](http://www.brenthamclub.co.uk)

38A Meadvale Road, Ealing W5 1NP

Telephone: 020 8997 2624

Email: [events@brenthamclub.co.uk](mailto:events@brenthamclub.co.uk)

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