



BRENTHAM NEWS



Brentham in Lockdown

It seems a long time since the AGM and my election as new Chair of the Brentham Society but as Thomas Hardy famously wrote "...experience is as to intensity, and not as to duration."

It really was just a few months ago that I was anticipating organising the wonderful Brentham summer events and meeting as many residents as possible, but as circumstances dramatically altered, my first committee meeting as Chair was an urgently called Zoom meeting to discuss how the Society could help residents with the outbreak of Coronavirus.

As fast as we were trying to identify vulnerable residents and ensure each street had groups of helpers, neighbours were already rallying round at breakneck speed to achieve this. The response from the Brentham community has been fantastic, supportive and creative in equal measures. There have been so many wonderful examples of community action and we will be paying tribute to some of these in this edition.

Although it's disappointing to lose events such as the Strawberry Tea, Open Gardens Day and May Day we have seen with lockdown that Brentham residents have found other ways to keep the community spirit alive. Many streets have been active with front garden events to engage and entertain neighbours!

Our last major get-together, mentioned earlier, was the Brentham Society AGM. At a well-attended event, we

were entertained by the outgoing MP Steve Pound and also said goodbye to Gina Mallin who stood down as Chair after 3 years. I would personally like to thank Gina for her dedication, unstinting enthusiasm, and the many things she achieved on behalf of Brentham during her tenure. She has indeed set a very high standard. We also welcomed a new (returning) member to the Brentham Society Committee, Steve Jenkins.

In the year ahead, the committee will continue its work in maintaining those aspects of Brentham that make it special, and helping residents with planning matters. It's worth a reminder – especially to new residents – that most alterations to Brentham properties, including changes to windows, need planning permission.

As we tentatively come out of lockdown and I see tennis returning to the Brentham Club it reminds me of the important development the Club is proposing to help its survival and the renovation to the tower. There's more about these later in this newsletter.

Strange as the recent times have been, the lovely quiet, virtually traffic free and beautiful streets of the estate have been a joy to walk around each day. How lucky we are to live in this wonderful suburb.

Jo Bradley, Chair of The Brentham Society



GARDENS and PHOTO COMPETITION

Calling all keen gardeners and aspiring photographers!

With the loss of our usual garden events, we looked for an alternative garden-themed entertainment. The result is a two part competition aimed at both gardeners and photographers which we hope will be fun to do and also raise money for **Ealing Foodbank**. The main categories are:

- 1) Best Brentham garden** - either front or back. Entrants will submit photos that convey their garden's key features, to be judged by a panel of expert gardeners.
- 2) Best garden-themed photograph** taken in Brentham. Submitted entries will be judged by a panel of photographic experts.

More details on page 6 and at www.brentham.com

Vicky Snodin



Lockdown brings out the best in Brentham

Photography for Charity



Andy Golding, who is a photography lecturer and a trustee and Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, was looking to use his skills for the community during the lockdown when he was alerted by neighbour Lara to Chelsea Smith's Canadian Front Door project. Fowler's Walk proved the perfect location to apply the same principles - photograph residents for charity, at a safe distance by the garden gate.

So Andy contacted neighbours through the local WhatsApp group, which has been buzzing with activity since the lockdown, and so far 18 homes have taken part in the project. Andy says it has been insightful, entertaining and he hopes has played a small part in bringing the community closer together.

Participants receive postcard sized prints and are asked to contribute through the Fowlers Walk JustGiving site. Andy says: "So far the project has raised more than £1000 for NHS charities and with new volunteers scheduled that total could keep rising, which is great!"



Although the Green Man could not play his part on May Day this year, he made a mysterious appearance in a May tree opposite the Club.



Rena Stewart of Meadvale Road with her carer Lidine Winter clapping for the NHS.



The Favel family bring out extra percussion for the NHS.

Birthday at a Distance

Anne Barnes, who has lived in Brentham Way for 46 years, celebrated her 85th birthday in April. She loves her birthday every year and as a surprise I asked everyone in Brentham Way to gather at 12pm to sing Happy Birthday to her. Neighbour Joel Marten said he'd been "practising his guitar at home and thought it would be nice to share it with others". The guitar made it extra-special and Anne said she "was very excited and loved the surprise. It was a birthday she will never forget". Her motto for life is 'I'm getting older but I'm never going to be old'. That's definitely true for the live wire that is Anne!

Vicky Snodin



Children in Lockdown

Emmy Azimi, aged 11, who has written for Brentham News before, reflects on life at home when you would expect to be at school.



During this unfortunate event, it is our job to keep the happiness and love in the Brentham estate running. This means being extra kind as this is new to all of us. We are all in this together.

Although I am always with my mum, dad and brother in our house we are making sure we are spending lots of quality time with each other as a family. During the day my mum and dad work and speak on the phone and sometimes ask me and my brother to be quiet or get off the internet, but then in the evenings and at meal times we enjoy time together. We do this more than we used to, and I really look forward to it. We try to spend our time outside whenever the weather is sunny.

I spend most of my time in the garden, listening to birds, watering plants and creating a wildflower patch, with the seeds a neighbour, Gina, gave me, and I'm doing it with my brother. My family and I have been

helping the bees when they haven't got much energy by giving them honey. We still haven't seen any hedgehogs although I have made nice places for them. I really like that there are not many cars or planes – we hear all the birds much more than we used to. Listening to them makes me very happy. My mum says she imagines this must have been what life was like on the Estate when it was first built.

Normally my school gives us a few hours of work a day and most of the time I sit in the garden while doing it. I try to do it by myself but sometimes I need help from my parents. I miss my friends and my teacher, but I prefer learning from home on my computer than actually going to school. I don't know when we will go back. I don't think anyone knows at the minute.

My favourite part of being at home is having meals together as a family and our daily walks around the block. We have been extremely fortunate with the warm weather we've been having. The sunny sun beaming down at us. We've also had a lot of time on our hands, so we've been cleaning the house thoroughly.

To give love to your family and friends you can send kind messages and get shopping for those who need help. You can chat with your neighbours and buy them shopping too when you go out. You can also send a video with all your friends/family saying, 'during this tragic time we will always have each other' and that will make their day. My grandparents are always very happy when I phone them.

Remember, always wash your hands with warm water for 20 seconds after you come in from outside, and before you eat. Make sure you're getting Vitamin D. Finally, remember we are in this together as a community.

We'll get through this. Just listen to all the tips. While being at home, and if you are ever down, just listen to the birds chirping as they sing.



Illustration by Olivia Sanandres, aged 11

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 Videos

If you are missing the real thing, there's a brief reminder of the fun of May Day on our website in 'Brentham's Virtual May'. You can also see a charming video portrait - 'Celebrating VE Day in Brentham'. www.brentham.com

Hedges

It's that time of year when hedges are growing at their fastest. So a gentle reminder to please keep them trimmed, especially in the twittens and on pavements where they can impede walkers.

A Brentham Childhood

Barbara Murray has always been a staunch supporter of Brentham. She served on the Brentham Society Committee and for eight years was a very efficient secretary. From 1981 to 2015 she hosted the annual Strawberry Tea in her garden. Here she reflects on an earlier, perhaps less hectic, time on the estate.

I am now 97 and have lived in Brentham since 1930 when my parents bought 2 Winscombe Crescent. I was the eldest of 4 siblings – I had two brothers when we moved in and my sister was born at No 2 in August 1930.



The estate was our playground and what a wonderful one it was! The houses and garden looked much as they do now but the streets were well nigh empty of traffic and not choked with parked cars so we were able to play quite safely in them. And there was also the 'Rec' (now the club grounds) and Pitshanger Park.

My recollection of those days was that we were outside most of the time when we were not at school.

The plot next to No 2 was vacant. Part of it was cultivated by a Mr McCarthy (Mac) as an allotment but the rest was left untended and became an enchanting 'overgrown' jungle of plum trees, raspberry canes, blackberries, rhubarb and whatever had survived from when it was an allotment before the houses were built. I remember there was a very tall Williams Pear tree outside our kitchen window which was felled when Winscombe Court flats were built. We spent many happy hours there making camps and inventing wonderful games. When the flats were built we established friendly relations with the workmen and they gave us the timber used to cast those awful concrete steps to the upper storey. We used it to build a super tree house in the May tree, accessed by a rope ladder and with a bridge across to the horse chestnut. We had bonfires and roasted potatoes. Nobody mentioned "health & safety" in those days but I don't remember anybody getting hurt.

When my parents bought the house there was ivy growing up the front wall and Virginia creeper on the back wall. Even the fauna was different – no foxes, squirrels or magpies but we had lots of hedgehogs, frogs, thrushes, blackbirds and sparrows. In the winter the sparrows used to congregate in great flocks in the trees along the Brent in the Rec and Pitshanger Park and in the spring many of them nested in our ivy and we lived

with the sound of incessant chirping. The Virginia creeper was a great attraction to the bees when it was in flower and their humming was continuous.

Unfortunately the ivy also housed many spiders and my mother was terrified of them when they found their way into the house; so the ivy had to go and with it all the nesting sparrows.

When we moved in, there were 8 quite large trees in our garden – 2 almonds, a laburnum, ash, apple, pear, May and horse chestnut. Alas only the apple now remains but in spite of its age it still produces a crop of lovely juicy fruit each year.

One super game we had involved getting from one point of the estate to another by way of the twittens without getting caught by our opponents.

We had lots of pets over the years – dogs, cats, guinea pigs, white mice, budgies, rabbits – not all at once I hasten to say. The guinea pigs spent the day in pens on the lawn which were moved progressively across the lawn. My father never needed to use a mower as the guinea pigs kept it beautifully cropped - our lawn always had a chequered appearance.

The mice tended to escape and there were strange stories of piebald wild mice seen in the area.

Recently we lost the oak in the backlands behind Brunner Road. When I was a child we had two oaks in Winscombe Crescent – one in the pavement outside No 30 and the second on the other side of the road near No 23, and I can also remember one in the pavement at the top of Holyoake Walk.

Those halcyon days came to an end with the war. I left school in 1939 and went to work in a bank in the city just in time to experience the blitz. My father and I patrolled the Brentham estate as ARP wardens. My brother Francis was killed in action in 1944 in Europe and brother Bernard joined the RAF with two local pals - Ray Lewry of Woodfield Avenue and Michael Moreton of Brentham Way.



Barbara, centre, with other Air Raid Wardens. Her father Richard Creamer, wearing glasses, is in the front row.



Michael died in a bombing raid and Bernard emigrated to Canada after the war.

My mother died in 1946, my father retired to Lancing and when my husband was demobbed we took over No 2 and brought up our family here but that's another story!

Barbara well remembers VE Day 1945, when she took her 3 year old daughter to a street party at the bottom end of Winscombe Crescent. Seventy five years later, under lockdown, she was content to tackle a new jigsaw puzzle and raise a glass of gin & tonic.



VE DAY 2020



Flags, bunting and street parties marked the 75th anniversary of VE day, all at a safe distance.



Micro Crops

Steve Jenkins was recently welcomed on to the Brentham Society committee. He and his wife Gina are keen gardeners.

Like most people the lockdown has forced Gina and me to change our shopping habits. We limit ourselves to a weekly walk to the local shops. We bake our own bread, make our own cheese and grow our own greens.

We don't have an allotment and rather than plough up the back garden WW2 style we decided to grow micro greens in a small greenhouse. It has been more successful than we expected.

We are currently growing peas, mustard, rocket, spinach and beetroot as well as numerous herbs. The idea with micro greens is to harvest the young shoots and small leaves rather than let the plants mature. This means we have more frequent, highly nutritious crops.

After some experimenting we have also found that a thin layer of soil in a recycled food tray is more productive than using larger plant pots.

We are far from self-sufficient but it's easy, fun and we don't have to carry so many bags back from the shops!



Top of the Tower

With windows on all four sides, there are fine views from the top of the Club Tower. And soon we hope it will become a meeting and archive room for the Brentham Society. Clive Evans reports.



In stark contrast to the national lockdown this year, the Tower restoration project has shown perverse signs of life. If you can get down to Meadvale Road, you will see for yourself that the windows in the Tower have all been mended and repainted.

It has been seven frustrating years since the Brentham Society agreed with the Brentham Club that we would raise the money necessary to refurbish the front of the Clubhouse, including the Tower, to prevent any further

deterioration. In exchange, the top floor of the Tower would become the archive of the Brentham Estate. After several false starts, changes in Club management,

and direction, we found ourselves at the end of last year with some £23,000 in the bank, not enough for the restoration we planned. But the Club realised that the windows were becoming a serious danger to members and the public, with panes of glass falling to the ground.

So it was decided to abandon the idea of a full restoration, and do what we could with the money we had. We found a builder who reckoned he could repair all the window frames – even the worst of them, and do it without the use of scaffolding. A Club member has fitted new radiators in the Archive Room, it has been replastered and painted.

Likewise, the staircase. So we very much hope that when the Club reopens,

we will also be able to open the Archive Room, not only for study, but also as a small meeting room. And the Tower will look like the focal point of the Estate that it was always intended to be.



Brentham Garden & Photographic Competition

This is a special Community Lockdown Fun Event which we hope everyone will enter whatever their age or level of expertise. We are looking forward to seeing lots of interesting photos!

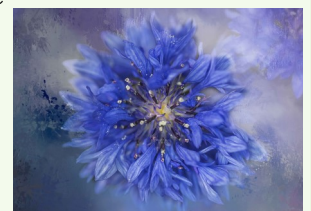
We are hoping to raise a substantial sum for **Ealing Foodbank**. The suggested minimum donation is £5 per entrant, to be made online.

In the **Garden Competition**, there are two categories: one for front gardens, and another for back gardens. Up to 4 photos for each garden can be submitted. It is the garden that will be judged, not the photos.

In the **Photography Competition**, there will be separate categories for different subjects: flowers, animals or insects, fruit and vegetables. For all these categories, submit up to 2 photos per entry. There will also be different classes of entry for adults and children. Entry forms should be completed, and photos submitted, through the Brentham website, where there are full details and rules.

www.brentham.com

Closing date for entries is **18th July**.



Vivian Green

The humble bench on Vivian Green has recently become a centre of controversy. On the one hand, it is much used by people of all ages, including the postman. They no doubt appreciate its peaceful location, and the chance for a rest on the way to and from Pitshanger Lane.

On the other hand, it is also used by young people, mostly late at night, who play music, talk loudly and smoke pot.

The solution to this problem seems obvious to some – remove the bench. This will make the Green less attractive and the youth will move on. But this, of course, is to the detriment of those who use the bench during the day. And if we remove this bench, shall we also remove those by the War Memorial, and the one by the bus stop?

My opinion – and that of the Brentham Society – is that the problem lies not with the bench, but with the antisocial behaviour – admittedly more difficult to solve. However, it is what neighbourhood policing is there to deal with, so we have contacted our local branch, led by Lee Briden. He has set up an incident which will be monitored, and has said he will try to increase local patrols. His advice is not to approach the youths directly, but to call 101 and report it. Please do this – it is at least worth giving the Police a chance.

Clive Evans



Jo King

Josephine Ann Kennedy was born some way from the Brentham Estate, in Redhill, Surrey, in February 1955. Twenty-eight years later, she married Peter King at St Barnabas Church and they moved into a house on Fowlers Walk. She fell in love with the area and spent many happy hours helping out at the annual May Day parade, creating beautiful bouquets for her daughter Jinny (born 1986) and ensuring all the children made their way through the streets to the Brentham Club, including her reluctant son Chris (born 1990) on one occasion, while collecting donations along the way.

Jo was a familiar face at St Barnabas, from Sunday services to the Frost Fair and Harvest Festival, using her superb organisational skills to ensure nobody missed out on tea, cake and a chat. Sadly, Jo was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's in 2012 and passed away in March of this year, aged just 65. By her family and all who met her, Jo will be remembered as a kind-hearted, generous woman who had time for everyone. She is sorely missed.
Josephine Ann King, 19 February 1955 - 20 March 2020



Chris King

Need help with dementia in Ealing? Contact Dementia Concern on 0208 568 4448 or at enquiries@dementiaconcern.co.uk

Norman Fagan

Norman Fagan from Newbridge, co Kildare, near Dublin came to Brentham in 1963. Encouraged by his then neighbour, Celia at 42 Fowlers Walk, he set up home with Mary, who ran the Brentham luncheon club, but she passed away in 2002.



An engineer by trade, my dad was amazing with metal and wood. He even worked on the lighting systems for the Sydney Opera house in Australia. He completely renovated his house from scratch, making everything himself including the front gate, even the shed which still stands with its metal roof in the garden.

Norman was a quiet but cheery and kind soul who loved helping his neighbours and would have relished the self-isolation period. He enjoyed the May Day dancing and distributing Brentham News to residents on Ludlow Road.

Days before he was taken ill Norman was up a ladder - not bad for an 87 year old, driving and enjoying his Toby Carvery in Denham.

He leaves behind his children Maura, Shaun, Charlotte and also Liann, who lived with him. On the day of Norman's funeral, neighbours from Fowlers Walk came to their gates to see his hearse pass through - a lovely tribute to a man who loved Brentham.

Liann Fagan



THE BRENTHAM CLUB



*Normally this page would show details of the Club's programme of events, but the building is currently closed. **Colin Hearn**, chair of the club, writes on the latest developments.*

What a difference a few weeks makes! Back in early March, we were finishing a redecoration of the upstairs bar, meaning most rooms in the Clubhouse had been redecorated or refurbished in the previous 12 months. We had a full events programme booked and were about to embark on a major membership drive. Then came Coronavirus!

The Club was closed on March 20th, all staff furloughed, and all possible expenditure stopped. The committee have been focusing on ensuring we survive through these challenging times and we have been helped by the loyalty and spirit shown by our members. Around 70% of members have renewed their subscriptions, many with little prospect of enjoying Club facilities in the foreseeable future! A volunteer workforce has been maintaining the grounds in the hope of some activity this summer—indeed, we opened some of our tennis courts on May 13th and hope to have play on the grass tennis

courts and bowling green by the beginning of June (all adhering strictly to Government guidelines). We have also been repairing and redecorating the rooms in the Tower in conjunction with The Brentham Society (see Page 6).

Also in progress is a plan that could provide long term security for the Club. It is proposed to build a house on the vacant plot next to the Club car park. It has been carefully designed to be in keeping with nearby Brentham houses and the Club building itself. Plans are now with the Ealing Planning Department and are available on the Council website for comment. Profit from the sale of the house will be used solely for much-needed refurbishment and repair of our Grade 2 listed main building.

The immediate future will not be easy, but the Club has encountered many challenges in its 109 year history. We trust that with the support of our members, we can look forward to better times!



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