



ISSUE 201 - JUNE 2021

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

# BRENTHAM NEWS

## Brentham in Summer

Welcome to the June Edition of Brentham News. June has always been my favourite month of the year, the start of summer, and writing this on a cold wet Sunday in May, it can't come soon enough! Of course Brentham looks glorious in June and this year it may look even better with residents having had more time to tend and nurture their gardens. Front gardens are already looking a treat - although it's a shame that we are unable to hold the Strawberry Tea or the Open Gardens event this year giving us a chance to admire more delights, usually hidden from view.

We plan to post some garden pictures on the notice boards during the summer, but meanwhile I hope you enjoy the archive pictures currently on display. Continuing the archive theme, we hear about Brentham's own station in this edition. By coincidence the station was located on the exact spot where a planning application is currently in progress to build a series of imposing tower blocks, blighting the view for residents in our neighbouring Brunswick Estate. The relentless building of high rise tower blocks in Ealing shows no signs of abating. It reminds us how fortunate we are in Brentham to live within an Article 4 Conservation

Area with strict planning control. And control not just of our architecture but also the views from within the estate. The Brentham Society continues to work hard in upholding - and where necessary getting the council to enforce - these strict planning rules if they are challenged.



One area where controls are harder to enforce is our visiting wildlife. Foxes we're familiar with but recent reports of rat colonies in gardens are unsettling. We don't know exactly how widespread they are but we would like to monitor the situation. Please get in touch with us if you think you have an issue.

As the lockdown eases, it's good to see the Brentham Club opening most of its facilities. It features in the News section of our website at [www.brentham.com](http://www.brentham.com) where we have added a fascinating article by David Bauckham: "Co-operative Spirit", which covers the history of the estate and details the history of Brentham Football Club, begun in 1919 at the original Brentham Institute. It's a reminder of the importance of the Club as a sporting centre - as well as a focus for social activities. I hope as many residents as possible are able to support it and help its recovery after lockdown. Details of current Club activities are on the back page. Enjoy the summer!

### Brentham Picture Archive

A number of stills from the archive have been posted on noticeboards in the estate which help to remind us of Brentham's rich history.

We have many more photographs and plans which chronicle life in Brentham over the last hundred years.

For anyone interested, items can be seen on the website and prints can be made to order for a small fee.

Contact:  
[archive@brentham.com](mailto:archive@brentham.com)



A charabanc outing sets off from Denison Road c 1920



**Jo Bradley, chair@brentham.com**

# The Health Benefits of Sprocketed Eaves, Half Dormers and Cat Slides

by Steve Jenkins

I started this series of articles with the aim of sharing some of the architectural features I had discovered since joining the Brentham Society Committee. However, as I dug deeper into the archives and researched the origins of the estate, I began to ask myself a question – Why does Brentham *feel* like a pleasant place?

The Cottagecore trend on the internet has seen a revival of English village aesthetics and a greater emphasis on simpler living. Young people appear to be searching for a sanctuary from the modern world. So, why do English villages evoke these feelings of calm? My research has uncovered two main reasons: Refuge and Prospect.

Apparently, evolution has encoded our brains to associate a sense of pleasure with objects or places that increase our chance of survival. Subconsciously we are always searching for shelter that looks safe and warm in an environment that appears lush and



A cat slide roof

uninterrupted, low-slung roofs with eaves that extend beyond the walls to almost envelop the house like a cosy blanket. These roofs, with their overhanging and sometimes “sprocketed” (curved) eaves can be found throughout Brentham. On some houses the roofs extend even further to produce what was historically - and appropriately - known as a “cat slide”. So Brentham’s large expansive roofs are not only functional, just looking at them can help reduce stress levels and provide a psychological boost.

However, Brentham’s health benefits don’t finish at the exterior. Health and wellbeing were vitally important to the founders of the Garden City movement in their search for the ideal living environment. One of the principal shareholders in Letchworth Garden City was Lord Northcliffe, the proprietor of the Daily Mail, and he was inspired to create the Ideal Home Exhibition in 1908. This helped drive a demand for light and airy interiors

and gave Brentham’s architects a challenge. They needed to design the equivalent of Dr Who’s Tardis – a cottage with a low roof on the outside but with light-filled interiors and high ceilings on the inside.

One of the ways they accomplished this was through the use of “half dormers” - windows that rise up from the walls into the low roof. Scientific research has now demonstrated that higher ceilings stimulate creativity and natural daylight boosts intelligence (students who are taught in rooms with more natural light achieve higher grades). Additionally, if you can see nature through your windows, then this is even more beneficial - lowering blood pressure, easing muscle tension and even accelerating recovery from surgery. Brentham’s houses could be regarded as very close to ideal.

So, it transpires that Brentham’s Arts and Crafts cottages with their long, low-slung roofs surrounded by green hedges, trees, gardens and open spaces are the kind of pastoral places Cottagecore followers now intuitively crave – a cosy refuge with views of lush, natural vegetation. The Brentham Garden Estate was a pioneering experiment in healthier living and, 100 years later, there is increasing scientific evidence to support its psychological and physiological benefits. I am beginning to appreciate that conserving Brentham means far more than protecting its architectural heritage.



Sprocketed eaves and half dormers



High ceilings inside, low roof outside

## Take a Walk Through the Evolution of Brentham



- Initial Edwardian terraces 1901
- Expansion of Ed. terraces 1903-1906
- Early Transitional 1905 -1906
- Pearson transitional 1907
- Pearson Phase 1908-1909
- Sutcliffe Phase 1910-1915
- Designs by Parker & Unwin
- Butler Phase 1920s
- Interwar phase 1925-1936
- Post-war Phase 1946-late1950s

For a relatively small estate, with just over 680 homes, Brentham boasts a rich variety of architectural styles, each with its own distinctive design features.

Although the cooperative ownership scheme was new, the first houses and their layout were similar to other Edwardian terraces. It was in 1907, when architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin laid out the plan for the garden estate, that the curved streets and Arts and Crafts influences began to appear.

Initially these changes were gradual but in 1908 25-year-old architect Cavendish Pearson appears to have made up for lost time with an explosion of Arts and Crafts features in his houses. He was replaced by

the more experienced George Lister Sutcliffe who applied a slightly more restrained aesthetic and designed the Brentham Club with its distinctive tower. In the 1920s George Butler was responsible for 16 homes, including the larger houses at the top end of Brentham Way.

It is the juxtaposition of these different architectural styles that makes Brentham so important as a conservation area. The planning restrictions imposed by the Article 4 Direction help ensure that the renovations or alterations made to each house are appropriate, and the various parts of Brentham remain distinct.

A leaflet that provides a self-guided tour is available to download at [www.brentham.com](http://www.brentham.com).

## Diana Graves

Neighbours and friends were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Diana Graves on 31<sup>st</sup> January. She was 64. Whilst in hospital with the distressing early symptoms of pancreatic cancer she also caught Covid-19. She moved to rural Shropshire to stay with her sister so that she could be looked after while being treated at the specialist Christie Hospital in Manchester. She was full of praise for the Christie during several rounds of chemotherapy but always optimistic about being able to return to her home in Brentham Way. Sadly, this didn't prove possible.



Diana moved to Brentham with her journalist husband David in the 1980s and it's where they had their two sons, Oli and Nathan. The couple took a keen interest in the life of the estate and David was a key organiser of Brentham Way's splendidly ambitious Golden Jubilee street party in June 2002. We were all shocked when a matter of weeks later he drowned in a tragic diving accident in the Bahamas whilst on assignment for the *Daily Telegraph*. A memorial bench for David was until recently sited under the oak on Denison-Ludlow green.

Diana was a good neighbour, a supportive member of the Brentham Society and a delightful person who always welcomed a chat. Her time at home was limited as she also had an extraordinary professional life as a metalwork conservator at the Victoria & Albert Museum. This merited an obituary in the *Guardian* by journalist and family friend Stephen Bates, who also wrote David's obituary (and the recent *Guardian* tribute to the Duke of Edinburgh). Conservation was both her profession and her passion and she loved to talk about her latest project. She generously shared her knowledge and enthusiasm by organising a special after-hours visit to the International Arts & Crafts exhibition at the V&A for the Brentham Society in May 2005. *Brentham News'* report of the outing



records that she shared her staff discount in the V&A shop with participants too.

After completing a degree in silversmithing at Sheffield School of Art, Diana worked for the National Trust before moving to the V&A, becoming Head of Metalwork Conservation, where she used maiden name, Diana Heath. Here, and in conservation work for Westminster Abbey, she was responsible for the care and restoration of a wide variety of priceless artefacts including the sword used by Henry V at Agincourt and the 'Wolsey Angels', four huge bronze figures originally designed for Cardinal Thomas Wolsey's tomb in Westminster Abbey and now part of the V&A collection.



Diana had an international reputation as a conservator of precious objects and was also in demand for freelance assignments. The last she completed before her illness was the cleaning of a 14<sup>th</sup> century Egyptian Mamluk ewer for the auction house Christie's. Fortunately, there are film records still available of Diana at the work she loved: on the Christie's website is a short film in which she demonstrates her painstaking work on the ewer; and on the V&A's YouTube page is a lovely film featuring Diana with the Wolsey Angels.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=lAahoxqils4&t=49s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lAahoxqils4&t=49s)

**Sue Elliott**

## Garden News



Over a year of very restricted living has made us appreciate our immediate surroundings more than ever. We are lucky to live in such a green space with so many trees and lovely gardens. Nature has given solace even for those who don't normally take much notice.

### PAVEMENTS AND VERGES

Plants and wildlife have become even more essential to our lives. I love all the pavement plantings especially in the spring and it would be great if more people planted around trees where there is space.

Walking up and down Brentham Way every day has made me consider the verges too. I would like to suggest that we apply to Ealing Council to support biodiversity and leave all the wild flowers to grow. The verges would be cut in late summer rather than spring to encourage wildlife. Further details at [www.plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk)

### THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY

Another initiative which I think we should participate in is The Queen's Green Canopy to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee in 2022. In association with The Woodland Trust there will be 3 million free saplings available for communities. Applications from June 2021. Trees should be planted from October 2021 to March 2022.

[www.queenscommonwealthcanopy.org](http://www.queenscommonwealthcanopy.org) It's such a lovely idea to celebrate the Queen's long reign and to benefit generations to come. [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

### HELPING BEES

The 20<sup>th</sup> May was World Bee Day. Wild bees and other pollinators are in decline. We can help by planting winter and early spring flowering trees, for example apple and willow. Plant bee-friendly plants such as foxgloves, honeysuckle and comfrey. Don't mow at least part of your lawn and keep weeds like dandelions and clover. And don't use pesticides.



### FRONT GARDENS COMPETITION

The judges have decided to skip the Spring Front Garden competition but we hope to resume in the Summer depending on how things go, so keep making your front gardens look lovely.

Happy Gardening!

**Vicky Snodin**



## University of the Third Age

Brentham resident Jurek Narozanski reports on the opportunities offered in Ealing

As a member of u3a for more than three years, I enjoyed the freedom to learn, to socialise and to have fun with like-minded people who are retired or semi-retired. It also helped me to come to terms with two bereavements. However, successive Covid-19 lockdowns imposed big changes in continuing to maintain contact with the members, a group amongst the most susceptible and thus isolated. Weekly face to face meetings with speakers delivering fascinating talks had to be abandoned.

The u3a found that it and its members had to embrace technologies rapidly, such as computers and tablets, up-to-date websites, and video-conferencing using Zoom. Thus, using digital means, the Ealing u3a has continued to offer talks on diverse topics, given mainly by specialists in their subject areas. Many Interest Groups have embraced this new way of working; they range from Book Circles to a Science Group, from French Conversation to History Groups, and there is even a thriving virtual Beer Investigation Group.

Judging by members' enthusiasm for the new formats, the enforced changes have been very successful. Meanwhile, we look forward to a time when groups of our size can once again meet safely in person.

For more about the Ealing u3a, the talks and the Interest Groups, please visit [www.u3asites.org.uk/ealing/](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/ealing/)

## Brentham's Own Station



In 1923 The Brenthamite magazine published the GWR summer timetable. It was possible to travel between Brentham and Westbourne Park – a journey of about 10 minutes – for connections with the electric train to Paddington. The first train of the day departed Brentham at 6.53am (8.57 on Sundays) and the last train of the day returned to Brentham at 9.55pm (8.41 on Sundays).



*The area before (above) and after (below) the building of the North Circular Road and the A40*



The station opened as Brentham on 1 May 1911 as a replacement for Twyford Abbey Halt on the New North Main Line. The name was changed to Brentham (for North Ealing) in 1932 and was later extended further to include "Greystoke Park". It closed on 15 June 1947 in advance of the opening of the extension of the Central Line from North Acton to Greenford on 30 June 1947. It was replaced by Hanger Lane station, just to the east.

*The Brenthamite*  
**G.W.R.**

While the map and the timetable refer to the station as Brentham, the road immediately north of the station was named:

**BRENTHAM HALT RD.**

In 1980 the road name was changed to West Gate by the Greater London Council. A campaign to have the name changed back was started by Brentham resident Mrs Edith Harris of Neville Road. But even with the support of several groups, such as Ealing History Society, The Great Western Society and Labour politicians, this was not to be. However the name does survive - the area today is known as Brentham Power Station.

*Alan Henderson*

## Missing May Day



The loss of two consecutive May Days has been a real blow - it is one of Brentham's most enjoyable and popular traditions. And that's not all that's been lost recently - the stately tree that has stood guard at the Club entrance has also gone (see below). For many years it has marked the starting point for the procession and was a useful support for the May Day bunting.

Apart from the War years and 1925, May Day has happened every year since 1908. But in 1981 the procession very nearly did not take place. With just one day to go, the organisers received a letter from Scotland Yard instructing them to observe a 28-day ban on marches

in London. It seems that "May Day procession" had suggested extreme left-wing intentions. With great speed a High Court hearing was arranged, where the judge was shown photos of past May Day processions. He concluded that the children "did not look like a very subversive lot", and he gave permission for the procession to go ahead. In the meantime the police had exempted the procession from the ban, though, curiously, on "religious" grounds. May Day that year will go down as the first and only time in the history of the Brentham tradition that prayers were said at the beginning and the end of the proceedings.

## Club Tree Felled

To add to the woes of the Brentham Club during lockdown, it was noticed that a large vertical split had appeared in the trunk of the large acacia tree in the car park. The Council Tree Department was consulted, they came to inspect it and declared it dead, and in need of removal. A local tree surgeon can be seen in the photographs working his way round the tree, taking down the major branches and finally cutting the main trunk into sections. The whole operation took only a few hours. The stump shows the poor state of the almost hollow tree. This is the latest in a series of venerable local trees that have, within the last three years, either shed large branches, or collapsed entirely. This raises the question as to whether we should survey all the remaining trees, especially the oaks, to see if any remedial work needs to be done, or if indeed, some have reached the end of their lives. Waiting for them to fall is perhaps not the best approach.

**Clive Evans**



## Mosaic for School

North Ealing Primary School are always looking for ways to brighten up their outdoor space so when Brentham mosaic artist Rosanna Henderson offered to donate a piece of her art to the school we jumped at the chance. I have long been an admirer of Rosanna's mosaics and was delighted at the thought of having a unique piece of her artwork for the school.

The beautiful rainbow - a recognised symbol of hope in difficult times - will be proudly displayed near the front entrance for children, staff and visitors to enjoy. The Brentham Society has a long history with the school, providing estate tours for pupils among other things, so it's great to see a local resident continuing the relationship and giving arts and crafts inspiration to the children.

**Joanne Gravestock, School Governor**





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The Brentham Garden Estate remains a sought-after location and we have recently sold these two houses in Brentham Way and Denison Road.

Contact Derek Grimshaw FRICS today to arrange a free, no-obligation appraisal on your property and to discuss your move.



## THE BRENTHAM CLUB

38A Meadvale Road, Ealing W5 1NP



*Open for Sports and Social Activities  
(in line with COVID Government guidance)*

TENNIS, CRICKET, FOOTBALL, BOWLS and SNOOKER  
(NB BRIDGE & DARTS to resume when allowed)

- Rooms for hire: birthday parties, weddings and wakes
- Licensed to hold weddings and civil ceremonies

**TOP BAR AND BALCONY**  
Monday – Friday 5.00pm–11.00pm  
Saturday 12.00pm–11.00pm  
Sunday 12.00pm–10.00pm

**THE FRED PERRY CAFÉ**  
Monday – Friday: 10.00am–2.00pm  
Saturday & Sunday: 9.00am–12.00pm  
All welcome, members and non-members

*Social Membership is only £35 for the first year!*

NB For Snooker there is a £20 supplement per year

- Members and guests can relax in the friendly Top Bar
- Escape to the balcony when it's sunny, enjoy the views and watch the setting sun
- Discounted prices in the bar and in the Fred Perry Café, as well as for events

FOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES, contact Monika Walska  
020 8997 2624  
email :[manager@brenthamclub.co.uk](mailto:manager@brenthamclub.co.uk) or go to  
[www.brenthamclub.co.uk](http://www.brenthamclub.co.uk)

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