



BRENTHAM NEWS

Welcome to the first Brentham News of 2024. It is at this time of the year that the Brentham Society looks forward to its AGM and also asks for membership renewal and for new members to join. I am very pleased this year that we are able to welcome Hugh Mather from St Mary's church to our AGM; I'm sure he will give a fascinating talk about his work and music at the church. Not one to be missed.

Of course the AGM is open to all residents, though non-members of the Brentham Society will be asked to join. This year's subscription is now due - just £5. The Society is run entirely by volunteers and your support is really valued and important.

A resident recently emailed us about the use of tarmac in place of paving stones for the pavements on the estate. Co-incidentally two huge swathes of unsightly tarmac appeared on the pavements opposite my house a few days later. Unfortunately our pavements are not covered by conservation policies or legislation as they are administered by the highways department.

Highways are supposed to consider the impact on conservation areas, although are not bound to this. But I am going to try to lobby the council and highways with photographic evidence of the detrimental effect the unsightly tarmac is having on the estate. I suspect budgetary constraints will be voiced, but in some areas

paving slabs have been replaced or re-laid - even close to trees. Interestingly our original pavements were paved with granite chip slabs with solid granite kerb stones and the gutters lined with stone setts, which would certainly be over budget now! Most of the granite kerb stones do remain however.

As an avid reader and member of a book club I am thinking of suggesting that our book club goes "walking"! I had not heard of the Ealing Walking Book Group (article page 3) and will be keeping an eye out for it now in Pitshanger park.

Enclosed with this edition is a flyer from the Brentham Club announcing a new fundraising campaign. Naturally we support this wholeheartedly. The Society uses the Club premises to house an office and its archive, as well as a venue for regular meetings. What's more, the building is of great architectural importance - an icon in the Garden Suburb.

It is an opportune moment to mention if you would like to join the Brentham Society Committee, we always welcome new volunteer members and the AGM provides a good opportunity for introductions. I look forward to seeing many of you there on March 19th.

Jo Bradley

chair@brentham.com

Brentham Society AGM at the Brentham Club 19th March at 8pm Featuring a talk by Hugh Mather



Hugh has developed a truly impressive series of award-winning concerts at the charming St Mary's Church in Perivale. He will tell us how he did it and how he gets international music stars to keep coming week after week.

Refreshments provided



The Brentham Society and why you should join

Your membership means we can continue to protect the unique architectural and social integrity of the estate, enhance the depth of knowledge and interest in the estate's history and promote events for all ages to enjoy.

The annual subscription helps us to produce our newsletter, maintain our website, and care for the local area as well as curate the extensive local archive. Details of how to join are on the back page.

Christmas Carol Singing

On the Wednesday before Christmas we spent two hours singing carols in almost every Brentham street. People listened from doorsteps, children leaned out of windows and some even joined us for a short time. This year, in addition to a JustGiving webpage, we were able to obtain a licence for doorstep collections so, while we sang carols, Angie and Gina went from door to door with collection boxes. The total donations, including gift-aid, amounted to just under £700.

A huge thank you to the volunteer carol singers, the street collectors and to all the Brentham residents who made donations.

Each year we choose a local charity and this year's donations were passed to Ealing Samaritans who thanked Brentham residents for the 'fantastic fundraising effort'.

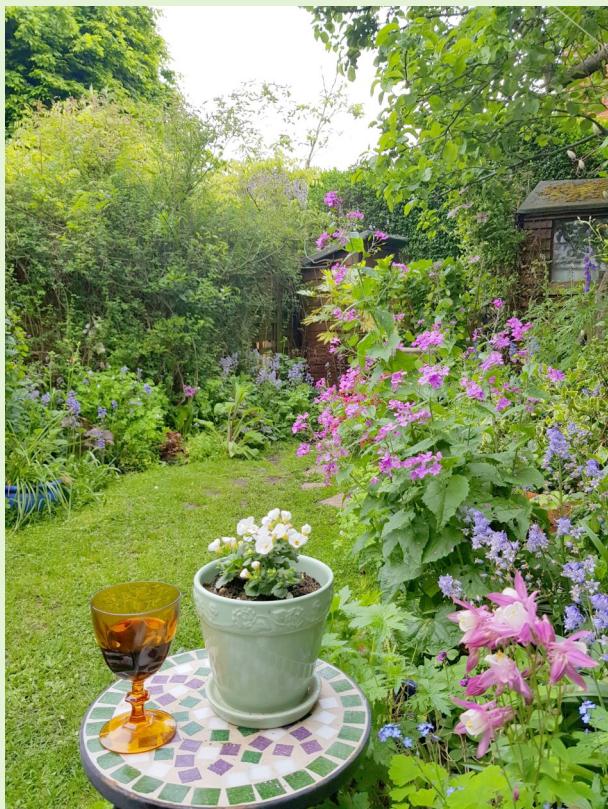


In addition to manning the phones and running an email support service, Ealing Samaritans participates in the Rail Industry Suicide prevention programme and runs the Listener Scheme at Wormwood Scrubs prison. Every Samaritans branch is an individual charity run entirely by volunteers and they are only able to continue to support those in despair and distress thanks to donations like yours.

If you need someone to talk to you can call them for free on 116 123.

Steve Jenkins

Spring is bursting through!



The snowdrops will soon be gone, crocuses and daffodils are making an appearance. Chubby little buds are forming on trees and shrubs. The days are becoming longer and there's work to be done in the garden. It's time to get outside and plan ahead. Order seeds if you've not already done so, and think about any changes you might want to make to your garden.

Bluebells and other spring flowers

After months of dark wintery days, the garden seems to explode effortlessly into colour with self-seeded honesty, bluebells, aquilegias and clouds of forget-me-nots. And there are days when we can comfortably sit outside to enjoy a cup of coffee or even a glass of wine!

◀ *The Spanish/hybrid bluebells in this picture of my garden (May 2023) are pretty but they do tend to take over, despite me trying to control their spread. Unlike Spanish bluebells, English bluebells have a beautiful scent. These native plants are a protected species; they are under threat in their natural woodland habitat because of the invasive and vigorous nature of their Spanish cousins.*



You don't have to go far to enjoy the beauty of our native bluebells. Perivale Wood nature reserve (near Perivale station) has amazing displays of fragrant English bluebells carpeting the woodlands in spring. Access is normally restricted but there are three or four open days in April for the public to visit. Dates are released a few weeks beforehand and booking is essential. For details see:

www.selbornesociety.org.uk

Colour throughout the year

It takes planning and effort to keep a constant supply of flowers in bloom throughout the seasons. Most of us simply don't have the time or the inclination. Evergreens with colourful foliage or stems and a variety of leaf shapes are really useful for year-round interest. Plant in spring to allow them to establish before winter.

Happy gardening!

Teresa Mazur

◀ *The evergreens in this photo (June 2022) are heucheras, and Artemisia Powis Castle with its feathery silver leaves. The Artemisia thrives on poor soil and needs sun with good drainage - not easy on heavy clay so add plenty of grit!*

Walking Book Group

Ealing Walking Book Club (EWBC) is modelled on a walking book club located in Hampstead, NW3, whose originator was Emily Rhodes (then of Daunts Book Shop). Gail Sanderson and I joined Emily's gathering and instantly loved its premise and the way it was run. Emily was happy for us to 'steal' her innovative book group and EWBC was created in 2013, with some shifts in the

way it is run while continuing to stay true to its basic format.



The format is to meet monthly, walk around Pitshanger Park and to discuss a book chosen each month by a member of the group. Whoever has suggested the book also takes on leading that month's discussion. A question based on themes raised in the book is put forward and we then break up into small groups of 2-4 people where invariably a many nuanced and lively discussion takes place. After around 10-15 minutes, we return to the large group, receive another question, and off we go.

We have no 'rules' about what book is chosen so have discussed novels, biographies and non-fiction. Fascinatingly, often the books which were least enjoyed to be read stimulate the most elucidating discussions. Time and time again, feedback has been how much the book "came alive" and was enjoyed even more following our conversations. Since we began we have only been rained off around 10 times...a feat in itself. Meeting outside means that there is no limit to participants.

See our website www.ealingwalkingbookclub.wordpress.com for further information and also to give you a sense of the variety of books which we have read over the years.

Ann David



An Unusual Childhood Remembered

Imagine a Brentham where:

- many homes are still lit by gas lamps and there is no running hot water
- trunks of street trees are painted white to show up in the dark
- “The very best bomb site” is just up the road and a favourite playground
- children are lucky to get an orange in their Christmas stocking and sweets are strictly rationed
- air raid shelters take up half of many Brentham gardens
- you can buy a Brentham house for £500.

This is the world former resident Anne Bowers grew up in, and she has left a special gift for future inhabitants of her old home, 30 Winscombe Crescent,

that can now be shared more widely.
During the long tedious hours of Covid lockdown in 2020 Anne Bowers, (née Tuffey), now 80 and living in Leeds, wrote a short memoir of her early years here which she popped into an



Anne Bowers

envelope and addressed ‘*To everyone who now lives at 30 Winscombe Crescent*’. Though less than a dozen pages long, this paints a lively and fascinating picture of post-war life on our estate and the wider area. Current residents Richard and Margaret Jones made contact with Anne and together they have kindly agreed to share her memories on the pages of *Brentham News*.



Meadvale Road after the bomb

Anne was born in 1943 towards the end of the Second World War when V1 ‘doodlebugs’ were a constant threat. Until she was four she lived with her parents Eileen and Leonard at 60 Meadvale Road. Her first memory is sitting on the front step looking out at a street full of rubble – the result of a V1 attack that destroyed a whole row of houses on the south side.

Tragically, in 1947 when Anne was four, her mother died shortly after giving birth to her baby brother. As a result Anne and her father moved in with his mother (‘Nana’) and widowed sister Gwladys (‘Auntie’) who lived at 30 Winscombe Crescent. Despite the trauma of losing her mother and the many privations of post-war life Anne describes an active childhood “full of

the most wonderful things.” The central figure in her life became her “partner in crime”, her beloved Nana, who taught her so much - including scrumping for fruit.

At nine she went to Notting Hill and Ealing High School, and from there to University College London to study Classics – a passion for Greek ignited by a book left by her mother. There followed a long and successful career as a teacher of Classics.

Anne left 30 Winscombe Crescent in 1966 when she married her husband John, an environmental economist. She has lived in Leeds since 1970 and has never been back to Brentham. Some things she recalls are long lost but some she might be surprised to learn have survived the eight decades since those childhood days.



Anne shows off her kilt



Nana

Here is the first selection of extracts, about Anne's memories of the after-effects of WW2.

"Looking back, I suppose life was quite difficult and uncomfortable but it never seemed so to me. In fact, it seemed full of the most wonderful things. Because I didn't know anything else everything seemed very normal, whereas the adults must have been constantly conscious of the nightmare of the war and the shortages and privations of rationing. This actually got worse after the war and didn't finally end until 1954 (for meat and bacon). How happy I and all my friends were when sweet rationing was lifted when I was ten! Before then it had been a maximum of 3 ounces a week. Sugar was strictly rationed but the allowance seemed quite high - 8 ounces a week, but that was for everything, making jams, puddings, biscuits and cakes as well as in teas.

Everyone talked about the war all the time at first; there was such a feeling of relief. Bombing had stopped and the loved ones who survived had been coming home. Nana had 2 younger sons. Bill (who lived in Neville Road) had been in the army, and Ray (who lived near Wormwood Scrubs, where he had been a warden) had been in the navy. Nana and their wives, like so many other families, had spent 6 years not knowing if they would return. That was something that completely went over my head as a child. My father hadn't been called up, nor had the eldest brother, Cecil who lived in Holyoake House flats. Cecil had two grocer's shops and I'm afraid that he was a bit of a black marketeer.

The physical remains of the war were all around; lots of bomb sites, air raid shelters, trees with the lower two yards painted white to help in blackouts, altered signposts and street signs (to baffle invading Germans) and pig bins at frequent strategic intervals to receive food waste. At the top of the Crescent, where it turned left, right in the middle of the T

junction, was a thick privet hedge (privet hedges were such a feature of the estate - I wonder if they are now?) with a huge hole. Auntie pointed this out to me as the place where she'd gone right through it when she whizzed down the hill on her bike in the blackout and missed the turning.

At the very top of that road was the very best



30 Winscombe Crescent

bomb site of all, where Princess Helena's College had been. It was huge and oh so dangerous, with roofless rooms to build dens in and teetering beams to balance along. It was of course totally out of bounds but all the better for that. We children knew how to push aside a couple of wonky palings and crawl through. The grounds were vast, overgrown and full of treasures like apple and walnut trees for scrumping - we'd call it 'foraging' nowadays.

I remember going home with my pinny (such a useful item for so many things) full of walnuts. Nana looked at me, still holding my treasure trove hidden in the

apron, and said 'Where's that walnut tree?' I hadn't realised that my hands, stained black from the green outer husks, had given me away. It was there that I found a group of giant puffballs that started off a lifetime's serious interest in fungi.

The first thing that struck me [about 30 Winscombe Crescent] was the Anderson air raid shelter half buried in the back garden. It seemed to me a wonderful den, but

Nana and Auntie had hated sleeping in it because it was so damp and cold. When the risks didn't seem so bad, they used to prefer to sleep under the stairs and there were still 2 camp beds in the special Cupboard Under The Stairs. What they dreaded most were the Doodlebugs (V1 ballistic missiles). Again and again, they would describe the loud drone of the engine, but the terrifying time was when it cut out and there was... silence. That's when the bomb would drop.

I think it was a Doodlebug that took out a lot of houses in Meadvale Road and part of St Barnabas Church in Pitshanger Lane. My very first memory is of sitting on the front step in Meadvale Road and seeing nothing but rubble. The blast blew our front door right up the stairs and it got stuck at the top."

We'll be sharing more, on life in a Brentford household and memories of Christmas and May Day, in future editions.

Sue Elliott



Anne dressed for May Day

Rena Stewart



It's with sadness that we report the passing of Rena Stewart, at the age of 100. She was a long time resident of Meadvale Road and Brentham News has reported on her eventful life before. It's good to see the national press telling her story in two recent obituaries – in the Times and Guardian.

After studying German Rena spent several years doing secret translating work at the wartime coding centre at Bletchley Park, and after the war she spent time in Germany helping with the interrogation of German prisoners. She even translated Hitler's will.

Later, with a passion for journalism, she became the first woman to head up a department in the BBC Overseas Service section at Bush House.

Rena loved music - she managed to squeeze a grand piano into the back room of her modest Brentham house – and was a great supporter and admirer of Hugh Mather's series of concerts in the charming church of St Mary's Perivale. In fact, Hugh hosted her 100th birthday party in the church with many of her friends and neighbours.

Peter Haisman



Peter with his wife Susan (in dark glasses) and some of the 'bins team'

We were also sad to hear that Peter Haisman died in December. He and Susan moved into Woodfield Avenue when they married in May 1998. Peter had been a Clinical Biochemist working at Central Middlesex hospital for many years and before that at Charing Cross.

He loved living in Brentham and is still remembered as one of the wheelie bin team delivering our special small bins around the estate. He is also remembered in the wider community for abseiling down high buildings to raise funds for London Air Ambulance and for his warmth and humour when quizmaster at the Memory Café. As an active member of St Barnabas, he was a valuable part of that community.

He had a great love of elephants and visited South Africa many times, always including a particular game park where, on several occasions, he had accompanied the elephant researcher on her expeditions.

Peter enjoyed music and theatre, good company, good food and his much-loved red wine.

He had 2 children and 5 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. He will be much missed by his family, his friends, and neighbours.

Pat Baxendale



Lectures on the third Monday of the month at 7.30 at St Barnabas Church Hall.

26th February: A portrait of Jewels: Following Missing Treasures Through Canvas.
Andrew Prince

25th March: A Little Paradise: Laos from Historic Buddhist Temples to Modern Silk-weaving.
Denise Heywood

22nd April: Miniature Portraits: Tiny Treasures close to our Hearts. Cindy Polemis

27th May: A Village in Heaven: Stanley Spencer's Cookham. Amy Lim

For more information visit our website: www.theartssocietyealing.org.uk

Brentham May Day



This year's parade and dancing will be held on **Saturday 18th May**

Enrolment for children will take place on Sunday 24th March between 4pm and 6pm at the Brentham Club. First rehearsal is on 14th April. The enrolment fee per child is £20.00.

Volunteers to help with teaching Maypole dances to the children would be much appreciated.

Enquiries: mayday@brentham.com

Brentham Club Update

It's been a busy few months at the Brentham Club. Our tennis and football sections have enjoyed almost continuous play, our twice weekly Bridge sessions have had record attendances, and our darts and snooker players are thriving in these dark winter nights. The cricket and bowls sections are preparing themselves for what we all hope will be a sunny summer!

On the social side, we are busy running yoga, French, art, teenage art, kick boxing, photography and other classes, and we have put on a number of very successful events, such as Street Food Fridays, Quiz nights and Improvisation comedy evenings. There have also been a number of great music nights, including sell out concerts featuring Beatles and Pink Floyd tribute bands and the ever-popular Derek Nash. More exciting events are planned over the coming months.

However, it is not all good news. The Grade 2 listed Clubhouse is 113 years old and increasingly showing signs of wear and tear. In the last few months alone, we have spent significant funds in various areas just to comply with new Health and Safety laws. We have undertaken a survey which has highlighted over 100 issues which will need fixing over time! We can manage some of this in the short term, but there needs to be a longer term plan to preserve our wonderful facilities. So, we are embarking on a major fund-raising drive with the aim of raising £200,000 over the next 5 years.



Details of this and how you can help are in the insert in this Newsletter. Please remember this is a unique club, owned and run by its members and very reliant on volunteer help.

Any offers of support or help will be gratefully received. For those of you who are not members, now is a great time to join. Our year runs from April 1st to March 31st and is just £50 for social-only Membership. There are many benefits and these are highlighted in the insert. You do not have to play sport to be a Club member! I look forward to seeing you at The Club.

Colin Hearn (Brentham Club Chair)

The Brentham Club – Tennis, Cricket, Football, Snooker, Bowls, Darts & Bridge

SPORTS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR EVERYONE

- Great venue for celebrations – from birthday and anniversary parties to weddings and wakes
- Licensed to hold weddings and civil ceremonies

THE FRED PERRY CAFÉ

Treat yourself to coffee and cake, or come for lunch – non-members are very welcome

TOP BAR AND BALCONY

Enjoy a relaxing drink in our main bar with guest ales and a choice of great wines; chill out on the balcony in the spring sunshine

For enquiries, email: manager@brenthamclub.co.uk

To book tickets and for more details on events, see website: www.brenthamclub.co.uk

WHAT'S ON ... at a glance

Sunday 25 February – QUIZ NIGHT
Saturday 23 March – QUEEN TRIBUTE BAND
Sunday 24 March – QUIZ NIGHT
Friday 12 April – COMEDY NIGHT
Saturday 20 April – ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE
Sunday 21 April – QUIZ NIGHT
Saturday 11 May – BRIT POP TRIBUTE
Friday 17 May – LIVE BAND (TOP BAR)
Saturday 18 May – MAY DAY
Saturday 8 June – TOTALLY BLONDIE (TRIBUTE)

FRIDAY STREET FOOD MARKETS 5.00 – 9.00pm

8 March / 19 April / 10 May / 14 June





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Brentham Events 2024

Where dates are to be confirmed (TBC) keep an eye on noticeboards and the website.

MARCH 19th Brentham Society AGM

A report on the year and your chance to discuss the work of the Society. Guest speaker Hugh Mather on St Mary's Perivale and his famous concerts.

APRIL TBC Cheese and Wine evening

MAY 18th Brentham May Day

A procession around Brentham, the May Queen crowning and maypole dancing in the Club grounds

JUNE 9th Open Gardens Day

Select rear gardens are open to visit and explore.

JUNE TBC Strawberry Tea

Meet and mingle with neighbours, Brentham Society members, Councillors and MPs

SEPTEMBER 14/15 & 21/22 Guided Walks

Part of London Open House

Brentham Society - Membership Details

The annual subscription, still only **£5 per household**, is now due.
(By giving more, you can help support more of the Society's work)

You can set up a Standing Order or make a payment by
Bank Transfer/Faster Payment using the following payee details:

Bank: CAF Bank

Account Name: Brentham Society

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Account No: 00019660

Payee Reference: Your house number and street name

And confirm you have done so by emailing: membership@brentham.com

Alternatively you can pay by
credit/debit card or PayPal via
our website:

www.brentham.com or scan the
QR code with your smart phone.



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