

June 2026

# BRENTHAM NEWS



120 years on, May Day continues to bring the Brentham community together.

## AGM and New Chair

I would like to welcome Clive as our new Chair of the Brentham Society. For those of you who were at the recent AGM you may have noted that the voting in was a little unconventional. We had approached Clive earlier in the year to suggest he might like to rejoin the committee and take up the soon to be vacated Chair position. He has a wealth of experience and was on the committee for many years previously. He initially declined and we did not have another candidate ready to step in. So it was somewhat of a welcome surprise when he changed his mind and offered to take up the role at the end of the AGM. I think this was down to the strength he saw in the current committee in terms of numbers, commitment and ability and the support of the members.

It was accepted that although proposed and seconded at the AGM this did not follow the correct process. So the committee met after the AGM to fully discuss the situation, and we unanimously agreed that we would like Clive as the new Chair. He was co-opted onto the committee at our next meeting and formally asked to act as Chair for this year. (New committee members are co-opted if they join before being officially voted in at an AGM). I am very pleased to be able to hand over the role of Chair to Clive who I know will do a fantastic job. I look forward to the Society members giving him their full backing. We promise to have totally conventional voting in of the new Committee next year!

Jo Bradley  
Chair, Brentham Society 2020-2026

I'm sorry for the confusion at the AGM, but now that the committee has confirmed that they are happy for me to be Chair, we can get on. Indeed, we have already had two meetings and are busy planning the Strawberry Tea to follow Brentham Open Gardens.

My primary concern is that less than half of households on the estate have joined the Society as members. It can't be the expense at a mere five pounds per household. If you have any ideas, please email me at [chair@Brentham.com](mailto:chair@Brentham.com).

Clive Evans  
Chair, Brentham Society



# CELEBRATING 120 YEARS *of May Day*

## MEMORABLE MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS

### 1906

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May, the streets of Brentham Garden Suburb came alive once more for the annual May Day parade, celebrating 120 years of a tradition that shows no sign of losing its magic.

In 1906, Brentham residents gathered to celebrate five years of Brentham Garden Suburb. Fifteen girls danced around a maypole, unknowingly starting a tradition that would still be thriving in 2026.

The community came together for more parties to celebrate Brentham, but it wasn't until after the First World War that the Brentham May Day tradition was established as an annual event.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1919 the pupils of Miss Molly Duncan, a teacher of acrobatic dancing and ballet, gathered inside the Brentham Institute to crown the May Queen and dance round a maypole.

The day was a resounding success. A year later, perhaps because so many children had turned up to watch the proceedings the previous year, Miss Duncan expanded the ceremony. Joining the children were several adults in fancy dress and a traditional May Day character in a framework of dense foliage, or Jack in the Green.

**If the 1920s stand out in the history of Brentham May Day, it is for the increasingly exotic and fanciful fancy-dress costumes worn by the adults.**

In 1923 old favourites such as Robin Hood and his Merry Men and St. George and his dragon were joined by a "posse of cow punchers" and someone dressed as a sports car.

Between 1927 and 1930, there were no festivities. Had it not been for Mr Ephgrave, a dapper Brentham stalwart who revived the celebrations in 1931, the tradition may well have died out.

Mr Ephgrave's efforts in 1931 were to mark a turning point, because from that year on, except for the war years and COVID, Brentham May Day has had an uninterrupted run.

This year, once again, residents were drawn to their garden gates by the sound of the approaching brass band, and soon the pavements were lined with familiar faces waiting for that first captivating glimpse. It didn't disappoint.

In 1906, 15 "gaily dressed maidens" danced round the maypole at a party to mark the fifth anniversary of Brentham Garden Suburb.



Children gathered around the maypole during one of Brentham's early May Day celebrations.

### 1919

Jack in the Green makes his first appearance and the children walked in procession around the neighbourhood. This time the maypole dancing took place outside, on the recreation ground next to the institute.



Children in flower crowns prepare for 'Circling', one of Brentham's traditional Maypole dances.



The procession as it begins its journey around the streets of Brentham.



Fifty years apart: former resident Andie Chandler (née Miller) Brentham May Queen in 1976, with Queen Megan, who now lives opposite the house on Winscombe Crescent where Andie grew up.

## 1911

Queen Victoria's youngest son, the Duke of Connaught, opened the suburb's social institute one stiflingly hot day in May 1911.

After a tour of Brentham in which the Duke "expressed appreciation of the gardens and tenants", the royal visitors watched the plaiting of the maypole, "a scene of much interest".

## 1981

Perhaps the most dramatic moment in its history came in 1981, when organisers received a letter from Scotland Yard just one week before the event, instructing them to observe a 28-day ban on marches in London.

The May Day procession had raised suspicions of extreme left-wing intent. With remarkable speed, an emergency High Court hearing was arranged. The judge, shown photographs of past processions, concluded that the children "did not look like a very subversive lot" and the procession went ahead.

The police, meanwhile, had granted an exemption on curious grounds: religion. It remains the only year in Brentham's May Day history that prayers were said at the start and end of proceedings.

More than 100 girls and boys, dressed in white and adorned with fresh flowers or fancy dress, led the procession through the suburb's leafy streets, accompanied by youngsters in fancy dress, the May Queen-elect, Britannia, and the ever-popular Jack in the Green.

More than a century on, Brentham May Day continues to bring the community together, just as it has for the past 120 years.

Jacqueline Shakespeare

*This article draws on research first published in The Green (May 2003) by former Brentham resident and May Day Committee member Wendy Sender.*



Queen Megan delivers her coronation speech.



Britannia prepares to lead the May Day procession.



The youngest members of the procession turning into Winscombe Crescent.



Dancers form a floral arch to welcome the May Queen onto the field.

# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## Christine Dawson

Memories of May Days past  
and why Brentham is where she belongs.

As part of our celebration of 120 years of May Day, we meet Christine, a former May Queen, devoted parishioner of St Barnabas Church, and a woman whose life has been part of Brentham for more than eighty years.

I met Christine at St Barnabas on a Thursday morning. The church is where she feels most at home. It's where she was confirmed, where she married and where she still worships each Sunday. On Thursdays she meets friends there at the Memory Café.

Christine's love of May Day comes through as soon as we start talking. Her face lights up as she remembers her first May Day at the age of four and the pride she felt on being crowned May Queen in 1957. She smiles as she thinks of her sixteen-year-old self, "still in ankle socks, still a child really, not like sixteen-year-olds now."

The church, Brentham Garden Suburb and its traditions have threaded their stories through Christine's life. Born during the war, she remembers worshipping at St Barnabas from an early age.

Father Hetherington was the vicar when she was small, a formidable character in his black cassock and biretta. Christine laughs as she remembers, "If he saw you up the



Christine at this year's May Day wearing her May Day pendant.



Photograph by Andy Golding

road and you hadn't been to church on Sunday, you were in trouble. He would bellow: 'Christine, you weren't in church on Sunday, why not?'

Christine talks with deep fondness about her parents. Her father was a gentle man, always smartly dressed. He was taken ill when Christine was just eight and died when she was sixteen, changing family life forever. Her mother raised Christine and her two siblings alone.

Through the ups and downs of life, May Day was a reassuring certainty, returning each spring with the same rituals and familiar rhythm. As she grew older, Christine remained part of it all - helping at rehearsals, following the procession, every year without fail.

These days she waits patiently at the Brentham Club for the procession to return and the dancing to begin, her May Day pendant around her neck, a treasured possession. "I wear my pendant every May Day, it's very special to me."

As you spend time with Christine, another side of her begins to appear. Beneath the churchgoer and former

May Queen, there is a mischievous streak.

She chuckles remembering one May Day when she and a friend secretly picked all the bluebell heads from another girl's posy. Another year, during the dancing, a small boy's trousers suddenly fell down mid-dance. He calmly pulled them back up again and carried on as if nothing had happened.

"You don't see many May Days like this now."

Christine's connection to Brentham stretches far beyond May Day. In the late 1970s she took a job as assistant manager at the Brentham Club and lived in the upstairs flat above the Club, near her mother, who by then lived just across from the club on the edge of Vivian Green.

The Brentham Club has always been part of her life. Her father had been treasurer of the football club, her brother played football, and Christine herself played tennis and bowls there.



Christine as May Queen, 1957

She also danced for many years - ballet, ballroom, performed at the Royal Albert Hall, and in two seasons in panto.

During one tennis match at the Club Christine fell badly, chipped a bone in her knee and had to be carried off the court by fellow players. The men offered to take her back to her flat to rest. Christine had other ideas.

"No," she told them firmly. "Please take me to the bar first."

Jacqueline Shakespeare

# LIVES REMEMBERED

## Pam Webster

Pam Webster died peacefully in March after a short stay in Meadow House Hospice. She and her husband, David, lived in Meadvale Road for 50 years. Living on the Brentham estate was a joy for Pam. She loved her garden, working in it, sitting in it, and entertaining friends and neighbours.

Pam had a special gift for gardening. She opened her back garden several times for Brentham Open Gardens and the highlight was her roses. So it was fitting that, in 2015, Pam was awarded the Rose Bowl for the best front garden throughout the year.

Pam, thank you for your friendship and sharing your love of gardening with so many of us.

Nita Davis



## John Benson

John Benson died earlier this year at the ripe old age of 97. He and his wife Jean had moved into Fowlers Walk in 1968, almost 60 years ago. They were very welcoming when Rosanna and I moved in next door in 1984.

John was a very keen photographer and his Secret Brentham Gallery was featured in Brentham News in February 2022 (BN203 – available from the archive on our website [www.brentham.com](http://www.brentham.com)).

John will be remembered by many residents as a friendly face in Fowlers Walk and will be sadly missed.

Alan Henderson



# CELEBRATING BRENTHAM GARDENS

## Brentham Open Gardens

Eight private gardens, three open for the first time, were enjoyed by residents and friends of Brentham. £1,650 was raised, with all proceeds donated to Meadow House Hospice, which cared for Pam Webster earlier this year.



Holly sharing the summer colour in her Holyoake Walk garden.



Visitors enjoying Mandy and Jamie's garden on Meadvale Road, where cuttings and gardening advice once shared by neighbour Pam Webster continue to flourish.



Agnes and Chris in Fowlers Walk, with the allotment they share with neighbours visible behind them.



The plant sale was as popular as ever with visitors.

## 2025 Rose Bowl

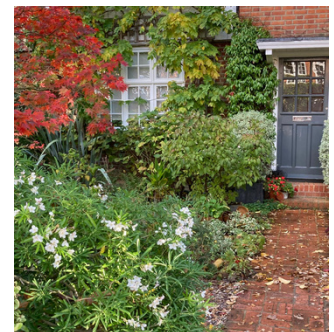
33 Holyoake Walk.



## Best Spring Garden

42 Holyoake Walk.

Runners up - 44 Brunner Road, 24 Brentham Way, 115 Fowlers Walk and 11 Ludlow Road.



# THE BRENTHAM WE NEARLY LOST



When I walk through Pitshanger Park, I am always struck by the cluttered appearance of the houses backing onto it. Perhaps after two decades of living in Brentham, I have become attuned to the harmonious variations-on-a-theme of our Arts and Crafts architecture. It makes me ask the question: how did Brentham manage to escape the same fate?

The truth is - it almost didn't.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Ealing Tenants Limited sold off many of the houses on the estate. The new private owners naturally looked for ways to modernise and extend their homes. Garages and extensions appeared, front gardens were paved over for cars, hedges were removed, and original small-pane timber windows were replaced. Brentham's distinctive character, its carefully balanced relationship between houses, gardens and green space, was beginning to come under threat.



The harmony of Brentham's rooflines and garden setting.

The Civic Amenities Act of 1967 allowed Ealing Council to grant Brentham conservation area status in 1969. However, the council still had limited powers to prevent many types of permitted development, including replacing windows and doors. Residents quickly realised that, left unchecked, these gradual alterations could permanently change the character of the estate

and even place its conservation status at risk.

In response, residents, through the fledgling Brentham Society, lobbied Ealing Council for an Article 4 Direction, giving additional protection to the estate. Although supportive in principle, the council initially had concerns about the resources needed to support it. Brentham was finally granted Article 4 status in 1975.

## Like our predecessors, we are guardians of Brentham.

So, what does it mean to live in a conservation area with an Article 4 Direction in 2026?

We can alter and improve our homes, but changes need to respect the architecture and garden settings around them. Living in Brentham means balancing personal choice with collective responsibility.

If we fail to do that, the future of Brentham could once again come under threat, just as it did in the 1960s.

Today, planning consent from Ealing Council is required for many alterations, including extensions, loft conversions, replacement windows, changes to front garden paths, hedges, trees and garden buildings.

The council is advised by a conservation officer and by the Brentham Conservation Area Advisory Panel, whose members bring extensive knowledge of the estate's historical, architectural and environmental requirements.

Most of us are neither architects nor architectural historians, so the Brentham Society also provides general guidance for residents considering changes to their homes

Brentham's Article 4 Direction gives additional protection to the estate's distinctive character.

It means some changes that would normally be allowed without planning permission - such as replacing windows, altering front gardens or adding extensions - require approval from Ealing Council.

including preliminary advice and access to relevant drawings and information.

It can be frustrating to have a dream design refused planning permission, so if you are thinking about making changes to your property, do reach out early for guidance ([advice@brentham.com](mailto:advice@brentham.com))

Elly Castellano



The careful balance of houses, gardens and open space remains at the heart of Brentham today.

# BRENTHAM THIS SUMMER

## at a glance

### June

Strawberry Tea  
(Brentham Society)

21<sup>st</sup> June, 3:30-5:30

This year's Strawberry Tea will be held at 26 Ludlow Road.

£5 for Brentham Society members, £7 for non-members. Children (6-17) half price, under 6 no charge.

### July

Elite Elton (Brentham Club)

4<sup>th</sup> July

A live tribute evening celebrating the music of Elton John, with classic songs spanning five decades from Rocket Man to Tiny Dancer.

Ealing Flower Festival - cinema in Bloom (St. Barnabas)

16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> July

Celebrating the 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St Barnabas Church and Ealing's Rich Cinema History with a 3-day Flower Festival. In partnership with Ealing Flower Club and Pitshanger Pictures.

### September

Borough of Ealing Art Trail

5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September

Ealing's largest art exhibition, BEAT, celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> year in 2026 ([ealingbeat.org.uk](http://ealingbeat.org.uk)).

Find full event details online:

[brentham.com](http://brentham.com)

[brenthamclub.co.uk](http://brenthamclub.co.uk)

[barnabites.org](http://barnabites.org)

### September cont.

Jazz Night (Brentham Club)

18<sup>th</sup> September

An evening of live jazz favourites from across the decades.

Estate Walks (Brentham Society)

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September

A guided walk around the suburb as part of the annual London Open House Weekend. Led by knowledgeable local residents.

Fred Perry Tournament (Brentham Club)

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September

The finals of the Fred Perry Tennis Trust Championship, supporting young players and grassroots tennis across the UK.

Quiz night (St. Barnabas)

26<sup>th</sup> September

An evening of general knowledge with quizmaster Steve Pound.

### October

Soul Rites (Brentham Club)

3<sup>rd</sup> October

A lively evening of soul and disco favourites from the 70s and 80s, performed by one of the UK's longest-running soul bands.

### Rosanna takes part in her tenth BEAT



Long term Brentham resident Rosanna Henderson is celebrating her tenth BEAT this year, showcasing her mosaic and fused glass art.

You will find Rosanna's Mosaics at Venue 9+ in the BEAT Brochure and on Instagram @rosannasmosaics.

10% of all Rosanna's sales are donated to Ealing Foodbank.

### Brentham authors reach the finals of the Local Authors Showcase

Two Brentham authors, Carlene Bender (Woodfield Road) and Sue Elliott (Brentham Way) were selected as finalists in this year's Local Authors Showcase, held as part of Ealing Book Festival.



The showcase gives 20 local writers two-minutes each to introduce their latest book in a fast-paced and entertaining evening.

Carlene, originally from Trinidad and Tobago, presented her lively quiz-led introduction to Black History in Ealing, while Sue introduced her sweeping history of a local London landmark, Trent Park House.

Both books are available on Amazon, or to order through Pitshanger Bookshop.

Trent Park House: A Century of Secrets, Sue Elliott.  
Black History in Ealing, West London: A quiz book, Carlene Bender.

# The Brentham Club

Sports and social activities for all

The Club offers a wide range of sports and social activities, including tennis, cricket, football, bowls, snooker, darts, bridge and social membership.

It is also a welcoming venue for celebrations of all kinds, from birthdays and Christmas parties to family gatherings, weddings and other special occasions. The Club is fully licensed to host civil ceremonies.

## THE FRED PERRY CAFÉ

Monday 10.00-16.00

Tuesday and Wednesday 10:00-17:00

Thursday and Friday 9:00-17:00

Saturday and Sunday: 9:00-14:00

## FRIDAY NIGHT STREET FOOD MARKETS

10<sup>th</sup> July, 14<sup>th</sup> August, 11<sup>th</sup> September and 9<sup>th</sup> October.

Membership of the Brentham Society is open to every household in Brentham through a £5 yearly subscription.

As a member, you're helping to protect the character of our garden suburb - not just the buildings, but the feeling of the place: the friendliness, the green spaces, the events that stitch us together, the shared history that makes Brentham unlike anywhere else.

It's easy to renew or start membership for 2026, simply set up a £5 standing order:

Bank details: CAF Bank  
Name: Brentham Society  
Sort code: 40-52-40  
Account No: 00019660  
Payee ref: first line of your address

Please email [membership@brentham.com](mailto:membership@brentham.com) to confirm payment.

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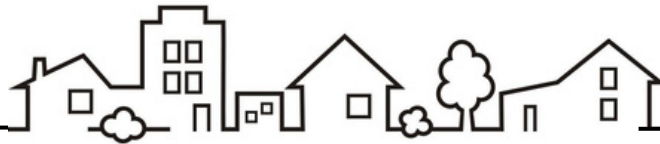
[www.brentham.com](http://www.brentham.com)



[brentham\\_garden\\_suburb](https://www.instagram.com/brentham_garden_suburb)



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**020 8992 5661**

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# GRIMSHAW

**[www.grimshawhomes.co.uk](http://www.grimshawhomes.co.uk)**

If you are considering a sale, contact Hugh Grimshaw or Liz Cullinan to arrange an appointment to discuss how we can help with your property move.



**FOR SALE**

**Fowlers Walk**

Brentham House

2 bedrooms | shower room/WC |

Reception room | Kitchen

Beautiful rear garden | deep front garden

No chain

Quoting price £725,000