

## June 1998 Newsletter

Please note that the newsletters contain un-edited extracts which have not been updated

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (21 APRIL 1998)**

The Chairman, Bob Gurd, in his address reminded members of some of the Society's recent achievements. It had worked with the Council to draw up guidelines to control the increase of licensed premises; and kept a check on all planning applications (around 200 a month) objecting to them when necessary. Having produced a booklet advising home owners on how to preserve and improve their property, it had also helped in the preparation of guidance on shop fronts, street lighting, and closed circuit television. The Society had secured amendments to the Borough's Unitary Development Plan and promoted the designation of Conservation Areas as well as the development of a green corridor along the A40.

The chairman emphasised the need for more members, particularly from the younger generation. The latter may be attracted by the Society's proposed web-site which will allow members to read newsletters on-line.

### **Charles Jones, Borough Surveyor and the making of Victorian Ealing**

The AGM was well attended, thanks to fascinating talk by Peter Hounsell, the author of *Ealing and Hanwell Past*, on Charles Jones, Borough Surveyor and the making of Victorian Ealing, summarised below.

Charles Jones (1830-1913), an architect and an engineer who came to live in Ealing during the 1850s, was employed by the borough council and its predecessors for 50 years, retiring at the age of 83 just before his death. Originally paid on a commission basis he did not become a full-time salaried officer until 1882. As an architect he had a penchant for building in the Gothic style using Kentish ragstone; as an engineer he designed roads, sewers, waste collection systems and electricity supply. At the local level he helped to form the council's organisation; and at the national level he participated in the creation of professional associations such as the Institute of Municipal and County Engineers of which he was the first honorary secretary in 1871. His book *Ealing: from village to corporate town* is a major source of local history, mentioning his own involvement in such affairs as the raising of the volunteers battalion.

The Ealing Local Board formed in 1863 had only two officials, both part-time, a clerk and

a surveyor. Jones in the latter position designed the first network of sewers with sewage works near Clayponds in South Ealing Road. An expansion in the staff of the local authority took place after 1873. The principal buildings still standing which Jones designed are the Congregational Church (1860) on The Green, the former Methodist Church (1869) at the corner of Windsor Road, the old town hall now NatWest Bank on the Broadway, and the present Town Hall (mid-1880s), including the fire station behind it on Longfield Road. The building most closely associated with his family of four girls and two boys was the Congregationalist Church which they all attended. Having seen an incinerator in Leeds in 1880 he installed a dust destructor, one of the first to be found in the south of England, which mixed sewage sludge with ashes to produce a hard clinker used for road making, and which powered machinery for converting the clinker into paving slabs from the waste heat generated. He also oversaw the electricity generator in Occupation Lane which supplied street lighting and domestic electricity.

When addressing a group of municipal engineers in Ealing in 1884 he drew their attention to its most attractive features, the number of open spaces which had been made into parks and the number of trees planted in the streets. The present lay-out of central Ealing still owes a lot to his period of service. As was said of Christopher Wren, if you seek a memorial, look around you.

## **Ealing's Conservation Areas: a series**

### **No. 1: Ealing Green**

by Kevin Newson

I enjoy living in Ealing's most interesting and varied conservation area. Our family house in Church Lane is typical of many modest Edwardian terraced houses, but directly faces a charming and well-proportioned early Georgian gentleman's residence, looking just like an over-sized doll's house. Built in the local Middlesex brick, with its brown/red hue, it must have stood proud among the damp little cottages that occupied Church Lane when it was called Frog Lane.

This mixture still typifies Ealing Green. Westfield House, facing down South Ealing Road, is one of the few remaining grand houses, but there are still plenty dating from the early 1800s, now contemplating their third century of domestic reliability. Pevsner noted (in 1951) that this stretch between Pitzhanger Manor - correct spelling - and St Mary's Church was "never systematically rebuilt" which must be a good start for a conservation area.

The southern end around St Mary's is the site of the original Ealing village. Not much appears to have happened around here for several centuries - except the various rebuildings of the church, and (according to local legend) the establishment of the plague

pit where the fine trees, the Seven Sisters, create an early dual carriageway on St Mary's Road. This area has quite recently lost its best local shops, but gained a grouping of antique and fine art shops, and interesting remnants include the Old Fire Station and its stable yard, long occupied by the Morgan Cars garage .

There is much of interest to the amateur local historian in this conservation area. Diversions on the walk up to Ealing Broadway might include a look at St Mary's Place, a run of cottages next to the New Inn. There was a coaching inn here in the seventeenth century, and a Hall of Variety. Some of the larger old houses have been replaced by ugly and very ugly buildings which one hopes will not happen again. One of the last substantial houses, for many years a builder's yard and offices, has been demolished and replaced by houses. The old house was much altered but did retain the unusual feature of tile-hanging to protect the northern wall against weather.

Other worthwhile diversions would be the Castle and Red Lion, both unspoilt pubs of character, now sadly rare in Ealing. Around Ealing Green itself notable recent changes have been the replacement of a factory with offices, and of a depot with a public house. Whilst the popularity of the latter with its customers is not shared by many local people, these are I think both examples of new buildings successfully incorporated into Ealing Green in a way which would not have happened before conservation area control. The Civic Society, through its representatives, has played a very full part in this.

Please ask your friends and neighbours who are interested in the history and the future of Ealing Green to support the Society.

### **LICENSED PREMISES**

The magistrates on 20 May considered two applications to restructure buildings in order to extend licensed premises, one from the Rendezvous Club (8 The Mall) and the other from the Broadway Boulevard in the High Street. The former was withdrawn and the latter was adjourned until 1 July. The Society has made representations against this method of using building control regulations and has challenged the renewal of the Broadway Boulevard's entertainment licence.

### **AWARD SCHEME**

Once again, the Society is organising its award scheme to encourage recognition of good new buildings, restorations, landscapes or townscape projects. The project must be in the borough, should have been completed in the last two years, and in use for at least six months. Details can be obtained from the Secretary (address above) Entries should reach him by 31 August.

### **POINTS TO NOTE**

In the election and referendum on 7 May the turn-out of voters in Ealing was 32.78%

(68,440); of these 76.49% voted in favour of a mayor for London.

The May issue of Heathrow News announces that the proposed Heathrow Express train to St.Pancras will stop at Hayes, Ealing Broadway and West Hampstead.

The Ealing Gazette on 15 May made a front-page story of the recommendations made by the Local Agenda 21 transport group to alter the traffic flow around Haven Green. The Society's chairman is a member of this group, and the Society is represented on the town centre forum which will be consulted in the preparation of the borough transport plan. Traffic management is a major subject on the Society's agenda, and the committee would welcome the suggestions of members and of interested parties.

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