



# EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



40TH YEAR 1967 – 2007

President: Prof. Sir Peter Hall Vice president: Corinne Templer

[www.ealingcivicsociety.org](http://www.ealingcivicsociety.org)

The  
Civic  
Trust

### The ECS Annual Award Ceremony

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30 pm  
Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall

**Speaker: Trevor Baylis OBE** (“the inventor of windup technology”)

### Chairman’s report

**Bob Gurd** welcomes readers to this Autumn newsletter.

I hope those of you who attended the special anniversary event in September enjoyed the occasion. We are particularly grateful to Waitrose for providing the excellent food and wine, and we were very pleased that our president, Sir Peter Hall was able to attend. Sir Peter toasted the future health of the Society and referred to the challenges of the years to come, in particular the Arcadia centre redevelopment.

Shortly after that event, the plans for Arcadia were published for consultation. Fuller details are elsewhere in this newsletter but as most of you will know from press reports the most striking feature is the 40-storey tower designed by Foster + Partners on the eastern side of the development opposite the station. However, we must not overlook the rest of the development, which in its own way presents equally important challenges, in particular the three other towers up to 15-storeys in height, not to mention the large amount of retail space. This level of development is unprecedented for Ealing and we are very concerned about the way in which it has evolved, with only limited public consultation and in the absence of a proper master plan drawn up for Ealing town centre. There is no

evidence that the amount of development now proposed can be supported by the existing infrastructure, whether it be services such as water and sewerage facilities, or to meet the needs of the occupants, such as health and education facilities.



*The proposed ‘Ealing Leaf’ tower from Haven Green*

We are so concerned about these proposals that we asked for an urgent meeting in September with the leader of the Council (Cllr Jason Stacey) and his Cabinet member responsible for regeneration (Cllr Richard Millican) so that they

could hear our concerns directly. Unfortunately, we were not very reassured by the meeting - we got the distinct impression that the Council is lamely sitting back and waiting for the planning application process to take its course. In particular, we asked Cllr Stacey where the Council stood on the recently published CABE/English Heritage guidance on tall buildings [see last newsletter for details]. We are still waiting for a response! Corinne Templer suggested to Cllr Stacey that this development could become as significant a millstone to his administration as the tram was to the previous Labour one.

Since the meeting, we have joined with a number of central Ealing residents' associations in an alliance - *Saving Ealing's Centre* - which has been formed especially to fight the development as it currently stands. The alliance is holding a public meeting at Ealing Town Hall on 27<sup>th</sup> November to assess the extent of the opposition to the development. I have no doubt that this development could become the most important issue that the Society has had to face since the battles about the Ealing Broadway Centre of 40 years ago. We will need as much support as possible to fight it and I urge you to encourage your friends and neighbours to join the alliance - if not the Society - to help us with our efforts.

I also have to report another unfortunate development - the likely demise of Ealing Centre Partnership, which the Society has been involved in since its beginning nearly 10 years ago. The Partnership was originally created at the suggestion of the Civic Trust (to which we are affiliated) to bring together the community, businesses and the local authority in a way intended to improve the fortunes of Ealing and West Ealing. The late Brian Harris (our former secretary) was the founder Civic Society member of the Partnership along with Corinne Templer who represented Walpole Residents' Association.

In a sense, the Partnership has been a victim of its own success, since the creation of the Ealing Broadway Business Improvement District (BID) in 2006 has resulted in the funding previously provided by businesses to the Partnership being redirected to the BID company that was created. This has left the Partnership without any significant source of funding whilst having an

expensive company structure to maintain. For this reason, the directors (of which I am one) met earlier in September to discuss its future, and decided to recommend winding up the company to its membership.

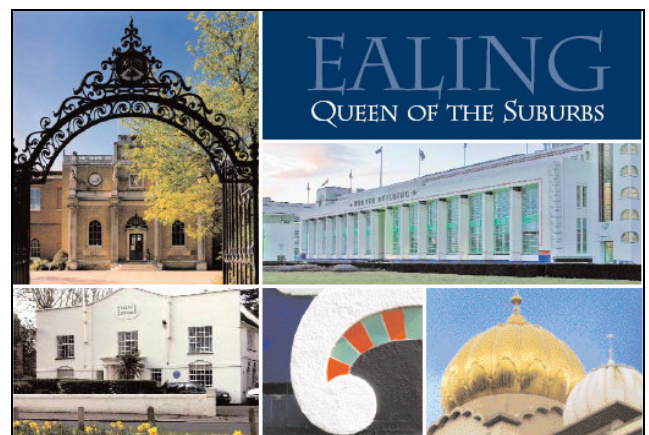
This would not preclude the possibility of the Partnership continuing as a less formal forum provided the membership agrees. An Extraordinary General Meeting will be held in November to decide its fate. The only good news is that even if the Partnership does disappear in its current form, the Society will remain involved with the BID company as I am its community director.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you at our award ceremony on Tuesday 20 November at 7:30 p.m. Our guest of honour will be Trevor Baylis (of wind-up radio fame).

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### **New! 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary EALING 'Queen of the Suburbs' Postcards**

Included with this issue of the newsletter is a free copy of the newly published postcard. We need to make them as widely available as possible, so why not take the enclosed card (stamped with Mike Tiley's contact details) to your local gift shop or newsagent to persuade them to place orders with him? They are available in packs of 50 for £12.50. Shops selling at say 50p each should make a tidy margin! Cheques payable to Ealing Civic Society.



ECS members can buy packs of 50 for a special price £7.50 (15p each) for your own private use. You'll need to collect them from Deirdre McLellan's house [address on back page].

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### Trams in Ealing!

Next time you find yourself in London with some time on your hands, it's worth a diversion south of the river to the British Film Institute's 'Mediatheque'. Among many fascinating gems from the BFI's enormous archive is a 1-minute film entitled 'Panorama of Ealing from a Moving Tram'. The film dates from 1901 and shows a tram heading eastwards along the The Mall in central Ealing towards the Common. A reminder of what once was!



*A tram in the Broadway in the early 1900s  
[The film can now also be viewed on-line at  
<http://creative.bfi.org.uk/titles/744196.html>].*

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### The Arcadia Centre proposals (and other planning matters)

*Judy Harris has been to look at the detailed planning application for this highly controversial development, now lodged with Ealing Council. These are her initial reactions:*

A box of documents is available for inspection at Perceval House and reportedly in borough libraries, and all 166 documents can be accessed (with no little difficulty) on the council website:

(<http://www.pam.ealing.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=96834>).

A 40-storey block of flats [see p.1 picture] is proposed opposite Ealing Broadway station, with access to a new shopping precinct under the columns on which the tower stands. In addition, three other towers of 15-, 10- and 7-storeys are proposed, to be built over the railway, together with a 5-storey block of affordable flats fronting onto Ealing Broadway. There would be over 700 flats in total. Retail at ground floor level has

pedestrian access which slopes up over the railway to Haven Green, with steps and ramps.

The most controversial aspect of the development is the tower designed by Foster + Partners, who were engaged by the developers specifically for this purpose. Most of the buildings are not designed by Fosters, however, and do not relate well to the tower or indeed to the surrounding conservation areas. The documentation accompanying the application explains how the current design was arrived at: in essence a high-density is needed in order to make the development economic. Other options were considered, including more low-rise blocks of greater bulk, but these were rejected in favour of the current scheme with the twin leaf-shaped tower (dubbed the "Broadway Leaf"). A decision was deliberately taken to provide twin elements to this tower in order to reduce the impact of the side facing onto Haven Green. Inevitably, this has resulted in a greater bulk on the south side facing the Broadway. This aspect of the development is likely to polarise public opinion – it is already clear from comments reported in the press and online that some people are strongly opposed whilst others think that it would bring new life to Ealing.

The scheme provides only 15% of affordable housing (rather than the 50% normally sought by the council and mayor of London); it provides no community facilities, no bus station, and little or no improvement to Haven Green. There is public space both within and around the site, but the residents will depend upon the Green and more distant parks for their open air recreation. High buildings are in any case contrary to conservation area policy in the current development plan, and it is not clear how the tower would fit in with the new guidance to local authorities on tall buildings. As yet, Ealing council appears to have taken no action in implementing this guidance.

The impact of the development on Haven Green would be in effect a 4-storey wall of buildings immediately adjacent to the fine mature trees, which could shorten their life. Overlooking, downdrafts and shadows are problems that are downplayed in the application. The towers will have a visual impact on a far wider area of the borough, and the development as a whole is likely to increase traffic and public transport congestion, as well as exacerbate parking

problems (394 spaces for 700 flats). And, not least, the inevitable demands such a development would create for new infrastructure such as schools, medical centres and amenity space are barely addressed.

#### *The Local Development Framework (LDF)*

Ironically, almost in parallel with the rising furore about the Arcadia proposals, consultation on the council's LDF 'planning issues and options' document ended in October. The long questionnaire covered about 300 sites throughout the borough, and set out a large number of development issues. Results of the consultation will be used to prepare some 'Preferred Options' proposals for consultation in March 2008 and to shape the 'LDF strategy and sites' policy.

Options for each site include staying the same as the unitary development plan (UDP), major development or redevelopment, or more modest change/further protection. Many of the options include new housing and increased housing densities. This, combined with existing conversions and small site redevelopments, would result in a large increase in the borough population. Town centres, some employment areas and housing estates are suggested for such redevelopment or regeneration schemes. But recent experience in West Ealing and South Acton is discouraging: designs for bleak and unattractive high buildings, with poor external amenity and a loss of green space.

Provision of new open space is left as an unresolved issue, and new schools are proposed on Metropolitan Open Land which is currently protected because of its size, nature conservation value and importance as 'green lungs'. These help to reduce summer temperatures and pollution, but above all provide open air recreation for Londoners. For these reasons the sustainability of such development options is open to question.

Additional information on nature conservation value is welcomed. But policy protection needs to be reconsidered to ensure that development on adjoining sites does not damage that value. The overall impact of a large increase in housing involves loss of employment and open land - both public and private garden space, higher buildings of questionable design and increased congestion on our roads, buses and trains. This

is unsustainable policy which should not be pursued. Because it is important to express community views as soon as possible we have endeavoured to comment on this mass of paperwork.

Finally, worthy of mention is a recent planning application under consideration for a new hotel and office scheme to replace the existing 1960s building at 22-24 Uxbridge Rd in Ealing. We are concerned about the design and materials and the impact on adjoining residents.

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#### **Licensing matters**

*Jim McLaughlin has been the Society's champion on licensing matters for several years. This article was held over from our special 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue last time but here Jim provides a context for what we face in Ealing today:*

In his *Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides*, James Boswell records Dr Johnson remarking that he remembered the time... "when all the decent people in Lichfield got drunk every night, and were not the worse thought of". Opinions clearly differed though, with a growing reaction to the conditions illustrated by Hogarth in 'Gin Lane', and the efforts of temperance societies: "Demon drink is raging".

As a result of this growing concern the Government began to take action and, by the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, measures were introduced to control the sale of alcohol. But such measures were not universally popular: the 1908 *Licensing Bill* provoked the brewers to organize trains to London for a meeting in Hyde Park which ended in rioting. However, the onset of the First World War and the need to keep munitions workers sober resulted in David Lloyd George introducing the *Defence of the Realm Act* in August 1914 which among other things limited the hours during which alcohol could be sold. Although the Act was repealed in 1918, a relatively complex system of prescribed drinking hours administered by local magistrates developed.

Restrictions on drinking hours have thus been in place for the best part of a century. Nevertheless, recent studies on the effects of alcohol have shown that all is not well. The 1998-1999 Home Office *Youth Lifestyles Survey*, for example, defined 'binge drinkers' as those who got very drunk at least once a month. The

survey found that 39% of 18–24 year olds fell into this category, and 60% of these admitted to criminal behaviour.

Against this background the present government decided that lack of flexibility and defined closing times were major contributors to the binge drinking problem. The *Licensing Act 2003* restored flexibility - in effect making 24-hour opening possible - and devolved the administration of the system to local authorities.

The Act requires local councils to produce a statement of licensing policy. In the original consultation letter on its statement, Ealing Council reiterated the Government's hope that extending hours would reduce binge-drinking and associated problems. Among other key aims were:

- to develop more family-friendly premises;
- to regenerate areas that needed investment, and to provide the employment opportunities that a thriving night time economy can bring; and
- to protect local residents from disturbance and anti-social behaviour.

It is not clear to us whether any progress has been made in achieving these aims and whether there has been any benefit to residents of Ealing. Certainly there have been benefits for both drinkers and the licensed trade, but for many residents the Central Ealing Zone is now a no-go area in the evening and at night. Part of the problem is an over-concentration of licensed premises in the central area, and Ealing Civic Society has opposed all applications to increase licensable activities in this area.

The 2003 Act recognises this problem of cumulative impact, and we have tried to ensure that Ealing Council's *Special Area Policy* is not only retained but made more robust.

At a national level we have responded to the invitation from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to contribute to the guidance issued to local councils on the working of the act. We feel that there has been insufficient recognition of the problems created by the licensed trade on the streets, and the guidance needs to be stronger in this respect. We also take the view that there would be fewer problems if councils, when granting new licences or allowing variations to existing ones, were able to make the conditions applicable to the *applicant* and not the *premises*.

In the Spring newsletter, we reported that the operators of *The Town House* (the Laurel Pub Company) had appealed against the sanctions imposed by the Council in response to the police request for a review the premises' licence. As the company had responded to the problems identified by the police, the legal advice to the Council was that the imposition of sanctions would not be upheld and the case was withdrawn.



*'The Town House', close to Ealing Broadway station*

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### **Shop numbering in central Ealing**

*Mike Tiley reports on a recent successful initiative:*

Have you seen any pigs flying about Ealing recently? I was told in one of our meetings that this would have to happen before we got anywhere with this initiative. But our campaign to persuade Ealing shopkeepers to display their street numbers is beginning to pay off!



*Mike Tiley(r) helping to identify no 21 Bond Street.  
[Photo courtesy Ealing Gazette].*

Steve Breen, the Manager of Ealing BID, has ordered some large black 'stick on' numbers on a white background and we had a session one afternoon in July putting up numbers on shop

windows, doors and facades in Bond Street, with the enthusiastic co-operation of their owners/managers.

I later contributed some words on this initial success on BBC 5Live for their *Drivetime* radio programme. I am now in contact with Ealing Council to persuade the planning department to make it a rule that planning permission for new shop facades and buildings will not be granted unless the street numbers are displayed clearly on the plans. Andy Pay, the BID Street Ranger, is going to continue the good work with the other shops in the BID area: Ealing may yet become the nation's leading place for shop number clarity.

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### **The Annual Awards Ceremony**

*Our vice president, Corinne Templer, reminds readers of our upcoming event:*

If you haven't been to an award ceremony in the past, why not try it out this year? Recognising and rewarding good design throughout the borough has been one of your Society's considerable achievements over the years. The Committee and the judges work really hard at assessing and adjudicating all the entries and I know they like members to come along and support their efforts. The winners are also appreciative of a good turnout and it's amazing to see the variety of good buildings which are (sometimes) tucked away each year. So do come along for a stimulating and enjoyable evening [see box on page 1 for details]. Our guest speaker Trevor Baylis should make it an interesting and entertaining occasion!



*Trevor Baylis in his workshop*

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### **Members – please send us an e-mail**

Ealing is entering a period of significant change with the plans for redevelopment of both the Arcadia site and Dickens Yard. We'd like to keep you up to date with what the Civic Society is doing to keep Ealing a pleasant place to live, shop and work, well designed and built on a human scale. There may be important public meetings you'd like to attend where the plans are discussed - the more people who attend, the more impact the views of those who have to live with these developments will have. These sometimes happen at short notice, and aren't always well publicised.

It's quicker, easier and cheaper to do this by e-mail than any other way. So please, if you have e-mail access yourself, send an e-mail to [black.gurd@virgin.net](mailto:black.gurd@virgin.net) so that we have your address. If you're not on e-mail, don't worry - everyone will still get the Newsletters by post as usual with details of all the Civic Society meetings and activities.

#### **2007/08 Executive Committee**

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**Judy Harris** (Secretary) 72 The Knoll, W13 8HY (8997 8824)  
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**Deirdre McLellan** (Membership – new members) 36 The Grove, W5 5LH (8567 4682)  
**Christine Gratus** (Membership – queries/finance) 32 The Grove, W5 5LH (8579 0902)  
**Mike Tiley** (Publicity Officer) 30 Devonshire Road, W5 4TP (8840 7447)  
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**Tony Miller** 6 Winscombe Crescent, W5 1AZ (8930 5130)  
**Mary Sergeant** 10 Eaton Rise, W5 3ER (8997 1058)

**Reading this and not a member?**

**Why not join us?**

**Phone 020 8567 4682 or see our website  
[www.ealingcivicsociety.org](http://www.ealingcivicsociety.org)**