



# EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



Founded in 1967

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

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

## Summer 2010

### ***Ealing Civic Society Events 2010***

#### **The ECS Annual Lecture**

Wednesday 16 June 7.30 pm  
The Queen's Hall, Ealing Town Hall  
Speaker: Professor Heinz Wolff

#### **Gunnersbury developments: walk and talk**

Saturday 4 September, 10.00-11.30 am  
The Small Mansion, Gunnersbury Park  
Speaker: James Wisdom, chairman of Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum

#### **The ECS Annual Awards Ceremony**

Thursday 4 November, 7.30 pm  
The Queen's Hall, Ealing Town Hall  
Speaker: Bettany Hughes, historian, author and broadcaster

### ***Chairman's message***

Members will know that Ealing Council switched to Labour control in the recent local elections. It is perhaps too early to forecast what impact this will have, although previous Labour administrations have tended to concentrate their attention on the eastern and western ends of the borough, reflecting their concentrations of greatest support. Whether this is good or bad news for the centre of Ealing remains to be seen. Judging from the number of empty development sites in Ealing town centre, the previous council's record can hardly be regarded as an exemplar of sound regeneration policy although, to be fair, it cannot be held responsible for the current recession. Let's hope the new Labour council learns lessons from the past.

### ***News about local developments***

On **Arcadia**, we are still awaiting Glenkerrin's response to their defeat at the Planning Inquiry but we understand that they have now replaced their architects. We have made a

preliminary approach to Glenkerrin to discuss their plans further, but it could be well into the year before we next hear from them. Sadly, our approaches to the previous Ealing Council were rebuffed. Perhaps the recent election results will lead to a better outcome, not least demonstrating that local politicians need to listen more carefully to their electorate?

On **Dickens Yard**, Save Ealing's Centre (SEC) has been considering pursuing judicial review but this is dependent upon whether it can get legal aid (via a third party) to pursue the case. Initial indications have not been encouraging, but SEC is persisting with its attempts. In the meantime, demolition has been taking place on site - but no tears have been shed for the old Annex building!



*All that remains of the old Town Hall Annex*

Elsewhere in the centre of Ealing there has been some movement on the future of the **cinema** site. It seems as if the recession has taken its toll on the original plans of Empire Cinemas (owned by an Irish cinema chain) and work was stopped in its tracks following demolition of all but the façade in early 2009. The council, to its credit, is serving a 'completion notice' on Empire Cinemas but it is not clear whether this will force their hand. In any case the notice is just the start of what could be a lengthy legal process. Ultimately

the council could buy the site by compulsory purchase if Empire Cinemas do not proceed but it is not clear where the money would come from. There are unconfirmed rumours that Empire are trying to sell the site to another operator. We would support this if it enabled the proposed 16-screen cinema development to go ahead.

The future of **Gunnersbury Park** also still remains in doubt following the flawed consultation last year. Many of you will remember the proposals to restore the buildings but at a very high price - the loss of part of the park (and associated trees) on the western side to housing development. We were not prepared to agree to this during the consultation and I am pleased that the council also refused to go along with the idea. Instead it has offered money to the project, but this still leaves a large funding gap to be bridged and there is no clear route to doing this at present. [See 'Events' panel for the best way to get up to date on developments.]

However, there is a happier story to tell on the **Hanger Lane/Madeley Road** houses. The applicant - a housing association - has withdrawn its original demolition proposals and is currently considering alternative options, which appear to retain at least the Madeley Road houses.

### **Walpole Park and Pitzhanger Manor**

At our AGM in April we had an interesting presentation on the future of Walpole Park and Pitzhanger Manor by committee members of the newly created Walpole Friends. The council will shortly be undertaking consultation on bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund for improvements to both the park and manor house, which could bring significant sums of money into the borough for improving these 'hidden gems' for the first time in many years. The council wants to have your views before decisions are taken. To ensure that you are on the inside track, you can sign up to become a 'friend' of Walpole Park at [www.walpolefriends.org](http://www.walpolefriends.org) or contact the Secretary, John Sears, at 18 Mattock Lane, W5 5NH.

### **The ECS Annual Lecture**

Readers may remember that we had to cancel last year's annual lecture at very short notice when our star speaker, Professor Heinz Wolff, Emeritus Professor of Bioengineering at Brunel University, was unfortunately taken ill at the last moment. He said at the time that he very much wanted to fulfil the commitment when he was recovered and we are very pleased to announce that he will be with us at Ealing

Town Hall on 16 June. He plans to talk to the intriguing title of: *How did Soviet cosmonauts land up in Ealing?* Don't miss the chance to find out the answer to the question.

### **The future of Haven Green - a potential 'conflict of interest' for Ealing Council**

Earlier this year, a local resident submitted a formal proposal to Ealing Council for Haven Green to be designated as a village green. This would provide it with greater protection than it currently enjoys as common land under Victorian legislation. As it is required to do so, the council duly advertised the application, and we understand that over 50 letters of support were received from local residents.

There were only two letters against - one from the council's own executive director of regeneration and housing, arguing that such status would affect its plans for the provision of bus stops and taxi stands on the Green; the other from the council's head of parks, on a legal technicality.

Apparently, the council can itself decide what to do next: it could either set up a committee to rule on the proposal or it could institute an independent public inquiry. We strongly take the view that Ealing Council should not determine the application itself as it is potentially conflicted: it should instead call for a Public Inquiry held by an independent planning inspector, answerable only to the Secretary of State. Again, perhaps we can hope that the change of power in Ealing Town Hall might lead to the right outcome. We will keep you posted on developments.

### **What's happening to our trees? - a threat to Ealing's heritage?**

One of the most attractive features of Ealing is the large number of mature trees in our parks and streets. So when one of our members contacted us about the felling of several trees on Ealing Common we decided to investigate.

The trees being felled are horse chestnuts, which have become badly affected by disease throughout London. The most serious disease is bleeding canker, which is weakening trees and making them susceptible to other secondary diseases. Parts of the trees then die. Recently a large limb fell off an affected horse chestnut along the Warwick Road extension on Ealing Common. That tree was subsequently felled, along with others that were becoming dangerous. Horse chestnuts on Ealing Common, Churchfield Road Recreation Ground and in Lammas Park are being monitored, and removed if they show

signs of secondary infection. Over the last two years, ten trees have been felled on the Common and eight in Churchfield Road, although none so far in Lammas Park.



*Ealing Common – a sad end for one of our heritage trees.*

As a secondary problem, horse chestnuts have also been damaged by leaf-miner, which causes leaves to turn brown and die before the autumn. The first report of horse chestnut leaf-miner in Ealing was in 2005, and it is still not clear exactly what effect it is having on the health of the trees, although it certainly spoils their appearance.

So what is the council doing about the problem? Following a number of public consultations, it is replacing the horse chestnuts with a mix of oak, lime and London plane trees (lime and oak only in Churchfield Road Recreation Ground). The council is also considering planting secondary avenues of new trees on Ealing Common, so that they can grow up alongside the mature trees.

### **Planning matters**

The society made 45 objections to policies in the draft Replacement London Plan (RLP) in January. These objections are very important because the RLP overrides the local plan, and both control what can be given planning permission locally.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) has selected a number of issues from all the objections for discussion at the Examination in Public, which will run from July to October. Many local authorities, businesses and community groups objected or supported these, so the GLA has made a selection of participants to appear at the examination. We have been allotted four sessions: the West London Economy, Nature Conservation, Tall Buildings and Aviation. We have also asked to be considered for the discussions about Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). SEC also objected and although they were not allotted any sessions they are

pressing for participation in six topics including housing increases and Metropolitan Centres. We can produce written statements on all our objections but they have to be ready by June. More information is available on the GLA web site.

Other recent planning matters include our objection to the design and overbearing aspect of the redevelopment of the Green Man Lane Estate/ multi-storey car park in West Ealing. This is likely to go to committee soon. We also still have concerns about the YMCA adaptation in Bond Street.

We have not objected to the placing of temporary classrooms in school playgrounds that have recently been permitted, because we recognise the urgent need for additional school places. But we think that the lack of sites for new schools or expansion of existing ones should not be solved by building on Green Belt, MOL or children's play space. We need green spaces for physical activity, nature conservation and health, and the influence they have on ameliorating urban temperatures, thereby helping to reduce pollution.

### **A membership survey – we need your views**

In this issue of the newsletter you'll find a questionnaire. It's short - only ten questions - and seeks your views on the Society's activities and meetings. Please take five minutes to complete and return it - it's important.

Our meetings usually attract between forty and a hundred people, less than a third of the membership. But we don't know if it's the same third that turns up to every meeting, or different people coming over the course of a year, when a topic catches their interest. Where do these active members come from? Could we attract more people to more meetings? What needs to change to make this happen? Even if you've never been to a meeting, or haven't been for some years, it would help if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire.

Meetings are one of the main ways by which the Society keeps in touch with its members - so let's hear what you think. If you prefer, you can complete the questionnaire on-line by going to the Society's website at [ealingcivicsociety.org](http://ealingcivicsociety.org). But if you filled in this questionnaire at the AGM - many thanks - and please don't complete another one!

**Locally listed buildings**

The current urban development plan (UDP) contains a list of locally listed buildings i.e. buildings which currently have no statutory protection but which the council believes have some intrinsic merit. There is a presumption against demolition unless an applicant proposing this can demonstrate that there is no other viable use for the building, or that planning benefits would outweigh its loss. The current list can be viewed on Ealing Council's website (see under 'planning'). We are always looking for additions to this list, so if you are aware of a building which you consider of architectural or historic importance please let us know.

**Shop front improvements**

As part of its town centre regeneration programme, the council is spending £1.6 million to improve shop fronts within the town centres of Acton, Central Ealing, West Ealing, Hanwell and Southall. The grant can be used to support physical improvements to features, frontages and facades, and businesses can apply for 90% grant up to a maximum of £10,000 in certain priority areas. Some areas with heritage value in Acton and Hanwell may also benefit from matched funding from English Heritage. In order to receive funding the improvements will need to comply with the provisions of a shop front guide on which the Society was consulted. In central Ealing a number of businesses in Bond Street have expressed interest in the fund.

**The story of our local Waitrose**

Members might know that the Society's first bronze plaque can be seen in the pavement outside 263 Acton High Street. Jointly sponsored by the Society, Acton History Group and Waitrose Ltd, it was unveiled in 2005 to commemorate the opening of a shop on this site in 1904 by Messrs Waite, Rose and Taylor. That shop subsequently became the first branch of Waitrose.

*Waitrose: seeking to attain perfection* is a new book by Janet Appleyard-Hobbs published by Acton History Group. The title is drawn from the slogan used by the first Waitrose shop in its advertisements at Christmas 1908. The book is available for £6 from Acton History Group, 11 Lynton Terrace, Acton, London W3 9DU.

**Launch of 'Civic Voice'**

The new national organisation to champion the civic movement and support local civic societies in England - Civic Voice - was launched on 17 April, as a successor to the Civic Trust, which folded last year. It has been designed as a smaller body, more responsive to civic societies and independently funded.

We have concluded that, in principle, membership of Civic Voice should bring many benefits; in particular it would enable the movement to have a stronger lobbying and campaigning presence at a national level. Membership would also enable access to what other civic societies are doing and exchange of information on fundraising and legal issues. After some discussion, we have decided to pay a first year subscription to Civic Voice (as well as a one-off donation as a contribution to set-up funding). It is too early to say whether the new body will be successful in its aims and we have therefore also decided to wait and see before committing to a long term subscription.

**2009/10 Executive Committee**

- Robert Gurd** (Chairman)  
60 Beaufort Rd W5 3EA (8998 4417)
- Corinne Templer** (Hon. Vice President)  
20 Mattock Lane W5 5BH (8567 5353)
- Judy Harris** (Secretary)  
72 The Knoll W13 8HY (8997 8824)
- Robin Roads** (Treasurer)  
2 North Lodge, Ealing Green W5 5QU  
(8579 5910)
- Deirdre McLellan**  
(Membership – new members)  
36 The Grove W5 5LH (8567 4682)
- Christine Gratus**  
(Membership – queries/ finance)  
32 The Grove W5 5LH (8579 0902)
- Philippa Dolphin** (Web Manager)  
52 Warwick Road W5 5PX (8579 1808)
- Mike Tiley**  
30 Devonshire Road W5 4TP (8840 7447)
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- Paul Fitzmaurice**  
18 Elers Road W13 9QD (8567 3024)
- Margaret Gold**  
24 Lyncroft Gardens W13 9PU (8567 6158)
- Tony Miller**  
6 Winscombe Crescent W5 1AZ (8930 5130)

**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)**