



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

Autumn 2010

Ealing Civic Society Events 2010

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

Central Ealing developments

The Arcadia site

There is still no news on the Arcadia development. There have been suggestions that the Council might now be more open to lower density options - despite the predilections of its Regeneration Department to go for 'high and dense' developments. However, apart from a change of architects, there is little sign of activity on Glenkerrin's part. They are still collecting rents from the shops so they may decide to sit tight until the economic position has improved before submitting any revised planning application.

Dickens Yard

The application for a judicial review was heard at a preliminary High Court hearing in early July. Unfortunately, the judge found that there were no grounds for a review, although he did grant leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal. He did not accept that insufficient account had been taken by the planning committee of the impact of the development upon conservation areas or on the listed Town Hall. Nor did he consider that the departures of the development from the original design brief for the site were sufficient to justify judicial

review. In doing so, he accepted the council's argument that subsequent changes to the London Plan justified the departures. Although the applicant (Tony Elley - a member of Save Ealing's Centre) is entitled to appeal, he has decided not to pursue his case further and SEC has insufficient resources to take it over.

We still think that the plans represent too dense a development which could potentially harm both the setting of the listed Town Hall and Christ the Saviour Church - a view shared by English Heritage. But now that the legal hurdles have been cleared St George are free to move forward with the development. Already, there are signs of renewed activity with the recent closure of the main car park. We and SEC will be checking closely the way in which the scheme proceeds to ensure that it is built in accordance with the permitted plans.

Former cinema site

There is still no movement on this site, which has been empty apart from the supported facade and an unsightly pile of rubble for nearly 18 months. There have been rumours that other operators are interested in taking over the site from Empire Cinemas but so far none has declared its hand. We reported previously that the Council was considering taking action to force Empire to complete their development and, failing this, would consider compulsory purchase of the site. With no sign of completion of the approved scheme we would support compulsory purchase, provided that led to development which incorporated cinema use.

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The 2010 ECS Annual Lecture

Many readers will have enjoyed this year's Annual Lecture which took place in June. Our speaker was Professor Heinz Wolff, Emeritus Professor of Bioengineering at Brunel University, who had planned to be with us last

year but had to pull out at the last moment because of illness.

Under the intriguing title of *How did Soviet cosmonauts land up in Ealing?* Prof Wolff gave a typically entertaining presentation to a packed audience at Ealing Town Hall. He described how the Brunel Institute had played a key role in the recruitment of Helen Sharman – Britain’s first astronaut – in the Anglo-Soviet space mission of 1991. Selected from 12,000 applicants who responded to a press advertisement, she visited the MIR space station in that year.



*Prof Wolff in typically mischievous pose in Ealing Town Hall.
[photo: Paul Champion]*

At the time, cooperation was close between Brunel (one of the few organisations in the UK with experience in the microgravity field) and the Soviet space programme. Part of this cooperation, he explained, consisted of enthusiastic parties at his Ealing home – hence the title of his talk - where the visiting cosmonauts and scientists were entertained by a talking bear robot, together with large quantities of vodka.



*Soviet cosmonauts departing a wild party in Ealing
[one of the slides Prof Wolff used in his talk]*

Prof Wolff ended his talk by outlining his vision of the steps needed to create a ‘home from home’ on Mars by the year 2190. Who knows what the centre of Ealing will look like by then!

* * *

Thank you for your help

Let’s hear it for the retailers of South Ealing who helped to publicise Heinz Wolff’s talk. Many thanks to **Acton Recycling Community**, 124 and 148 South Ealing Road; **Leon** (Mexican specialities) 114 South Ealing Road; **Digital Pictures and Print**, 138 South Ealing Road; **Andreas Barber Shop**, 82 South Ealing Road; **Euro’s Newsagent** 96 South Ealing Road; **Richardson’s Fine Foods**, 110 South Ealing Road and **Reg Richings**, Piano Tuner, 51 The Grove. And thanks again to all those shops mentioned in our last Newsletter who helped again this time (sorry, no space to name everyone again).

Even bigger thanks must go to all those members who persuaded the shopkeepers to put up posters, and who delivered membership forms and leaflets for the Annual Lecture to their friends and neighbours. The excellent turnout for the lecture had an unusually high proportion of unfamiliar faces and non-members, some of whom became members. It makes a big difference when we have good publicity for a meeting and your efforts really did help.

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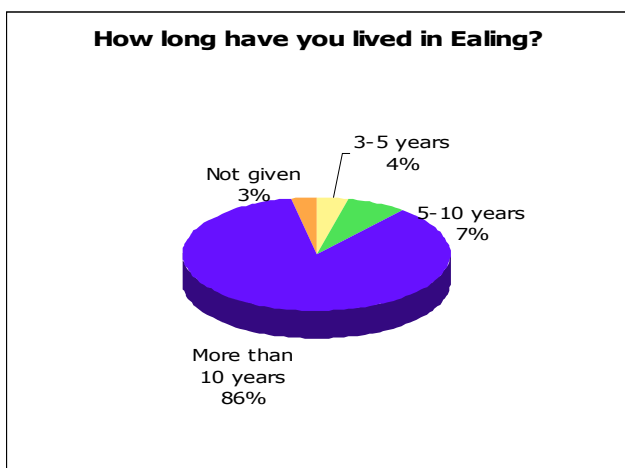
The Membership Survey: what you told us

*Readers will remember that we included a short questionnaire with the last newsletter for members to give us their views on the Society’s activities and meetings. We also distributed copies at the AGM in April and via e-mail (to those for whom we have addresses). There are some very important issues for you, the membership, and for the committee in taking the Society forward. Here, **Christine Gratus** outlines her analysis of the results:*

Is there such a thing as a typical Civic Society member? The people who replied to the survey do have some common characteristics – above all, the length of time they’ve lived in Ealing. Nine out of ten have lived here for more than ten years and some, they told us, for much longer (including your reporter, who can claim 66 years as an Ealing resident).

But even though members have lived in Ealing for many years, they haven’t necessarily belonged to the Civic Society for all that time. Perhaps the major development proposals for Ealing of the past few years have encouraged

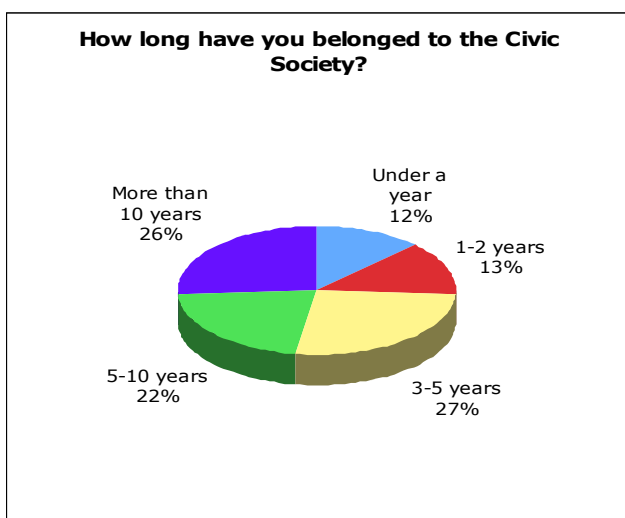
an interest in the Society's work and aims, for two in three of those who replied have been members for less than five years.



Although the Society's work covers the entire borough, most of the members live in W5. Every effort is made to represent the views of residents borough-wide, and in recent years the Society has commented on planning applications in Acton, Greenford, Hanwell, West Ealing and Southall, even though few of our members live in these areas.

Where our members live

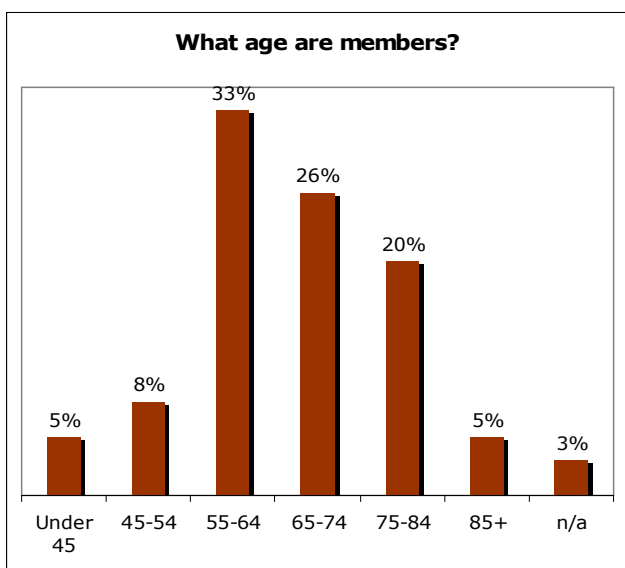
Postal district	Number	%
W3	3	4
W5	49	66
W7	5	7
W13	13	17
Other	3	3
Not given	2	3
Total responses	76	100



As you might expect, Civic Society members have a strong interest in the future direction of the borough. The most popular meetings were the 2008 Annual Lecture at which our President, Sir Peter Hall, and his students suggested ideas for how Ealing could develop in the future, and the 2009 AGM where the guest speaker was Tony Palmer, giving his personal views on the same subject.

Suggestions for future meetings emphasised local sustainability and transport, and there were many idea for local visits, including Gunnersbury Park [see Events on page 1], the Gurdwara at Southall and Southall Manor House, a Brunel walk and exploring the South Acton area, once the home of laundries and factories.

Or perhaps it's sign of maturity - most members, including those who joined recently, are over 55. With over-50s the fastest-growing age group generally, this suggests a healthy future for the Society.



If you suggested a subject for an activity and you'd be prepared to organise a Civic Society event, do please let us know. As you're probably aware, all the people who help run the Society are volunteers themselves. Assessing planning and licensing applications and trying to ensure that decisions are taken in the interests of residents makes enormous demands on the people who undertake it, so while picketing the site of the demolished cinema on the Uxbridge Road every weekend (one of the suggestions for activities) has its attractions, it's not likely to feature on our list of events!

Note: These results are based on the people who returned a completed questionnaire. Only 37% of households on our membership database did so; as a result, the findings are not necessarily representative of the membership as a whole, although perhaps provide the views of those who are most concerned about what the Society does and

how it might best achieve its aims. Many thanks to all those who responded.

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The 2010 ECS Annual Award

This year's award evening will take place on 4th November with guest speaker Bettany Hughes, the well-known historian, author and broadcaster. She has written and presented a number of documentaries for television, including *When the Moors Ruled Europe*, *Helen of Troy* and *The Spartans* for Channel 4. Her book *Helen of Troy* was published in 2005. She is currently writing a book on Socrates.



*Bettany Hughes on location
[source: website]*

There is still time to nominate entries for consideration by the judges, so let Judy Harris, our Secretary (contact details on back page) know about any impressive developments, buildings or landscaping in your local area.

Last year we had an encouraging number of entries and the overall winner chosen by the judges was Morris House in Acton – a conversion of a former Morris Minor parts distribution warehouse for Shepherds Bush Housing Group (SBHG) to provide 'shared ownership' housing. The development has since received an international architecture award.

The judging panel assesses entries against four criteria: design; fitness for purpose; flexibility to meet changing needs; and other factors such as energy efficiency and re-use of materials. Further details about the award scheme and an entry form are available on the ECS website.



The 2009 award winner - Morris House, Acton

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The 'Sky Ride' – fun or folly?

The Ealing 'Sky Ride' last month seemed to be very popular, at least to the 13,000 people who cycled round the segregated route on Ealing's streets.

Opinions were divided however. Some residents felt aggrieved that they were unable to deliver goods to their front doors on that day, and others were concerned about access, particularly for carers of housebound people. On the other hand, cycling enthusiasts suggested that residents might perhaps, with some forethought, have planned to use one of the other 364 days in the year to make home deliveries, and even daily carers could have made better use of local bus services or walked a little further that day. Whatever your point of view, in the event there seemed to be remarkably little disruption to normal road traffic, with the aid of temporary traffic lights and marshals where the cycle route crossed the main roads.

While such ventures must clearly be properly planned and coordinated to minimise disturbance to local residents as far as possible, it could be argued that anything that might help tackle the ever-increasing traffic congestion on our streets must be applauded. If only a small proportion of drivers can be encouraged to take up healthy exercise on a bike instead of leaping into their cars, perhaps our streets would be rather more pleasant places for residents?



The start of the ride in Lammas Park
[source: Mayor of London]

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Receiving the newsletter by e-mail

Several people who replied to the membership survey on the internet asked to receive the newsletter electronically, but didn't give an email address. If you're reading this on the printed page and would rather have the electronic version, please mail ealingcivic@btinternet.com and let us know. Do make it clear if you wish to continue receiving the print version as well.

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Is your subscription due?

If you pay your subscription by cash or cheque and you have not yet paid in 2010 it is now due (or very soon will be if you joined in the 2nd half of the year). Your cheque for £8 payable to Ealing Civic Society should be sent to Robin Roads, Hon Treasurer, Ealing Civic Society (address on back page).

Alternatively, why not save yourself the trouble of sending a cheque and, instead, pay by standing order? You will save yourself £1 per annum. The subscription by standing order is reduced to £7 because it saves the Treasurer and the Society much work. For a standing order form, please e-mail the Treasurer at: Robin@robinroads.co.uk or telephone him on 8579 5910. A form can also be obtained by downloading from our website.

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Remember us in your will

We have particular cause to thank Janet Millar when she left us money in her will some five years ago. This has proved particularly reassuring in the current economic circumstances and when we have been faced with several significant planning challenges in

quick succession. All of us should have wills. When reviewing yours, you might like to remember Ealing Civic Society. All you need to do is to refer to our charity number (290698), state an amount (either a fixed sum ideally linked to inflation or a percentage of the residuary estate) and your solicitor will do the rest.

Dates for your diary

On **Sunday 12th September** The Brentham Society is putting on a trip to the Gidea Park & District Civic Society to which ECS members are very welcome. Further details are available from Sue Elliott of the Brentham Society at bevansue@globalnet.co.uk. Sue tells us that Gidea Park is a fascinating 'exhibition estate' of over 100 model cottages and houses associated with the Arts and Crafts movement.

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This year's **Open House** London architectural festival, will take place on the weekend of **18th and 19th September**. Open House is a city-wide celebration of the buildings, places and neighbourhoods where we live, work and play. Now in its 18th year, it is a unique opportunity to get inside what makes London great and be inspired by the power of architecture to transform the quality of our lives. The full programme has yet to be finalised, but confirmed so far are:

- Pitzhanger Manor
- Ealing Abbey
- A walk along Hanwell flight of locks on the canal (among other walks)
- 14 South Parade, Bedford Park W4 (the Voysey house)
- a zero-carbon loft conversion in Hanwell, which has been described as ... "an eco-refurbishment project which crams in just about every energy- and water-saving device known to man".

More details will be available at <http://open-city.org.uk/activities/london/index.html>

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Tuesday 21st September 7.00 pm, Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall: Meeting on the local development framework, hosted by ECS, to discuss future plans for central Ealing in the period 2011-2026 including provision of housing, community facilities and infrastructure requirements.

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Ealing library talks: The early autumn season of talks at Ealing Central Library this time feature two Society committee members as speakers:

Wednesday 29 September, 6.15 pm: Mike Tiley will talk on *Blue Plaques and other local plaques*, covering the range of commemorative plaques in the borough and the history behind them. As well as Blue Plaques by English Heritage, the local area has several plaques sponsored by Ealing Civic Society and other bodies such as the Dead Comics Society.

Elaine Fraser on 8567 1285 or a.fraser930@ntlworld.com.



Unveiling the English Heritage plaque to Dorothea Lambert Chambers, Britain's Wimbledon tennis champion before the First World War, at St Matthews Vicarage, North Common Road W5, in July 2005.



*Solitude, on a sunlit Ealing Common
[photo: Gordon Michell]*

Thursday 7 October, 6.15: Robert Gurd will take as his title: *Iconic factories of West London*, looking at the interwar factories on both the A4 and A40. This is in fact the second (of two) talks in the Story of London initiative; part 1 is the night before entitled *Innovations in Ealing*.

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New cards from Ealing Common Society

Local resident Gordon Michell, a long-term supporter of Ealing Civic Society, was a keen photographer of the local scene. He was a distinguished architect with a strong interest in urban design and conservation. His wife Eleanor, also an architect, is still an ECS member.

Sadly, Gordon died in November 2009, but he left behind a series of atmospheric black and white photographs of Ealing Common that have been turned into a set of very attractive cards by Ealing Common Society. They are only 70p each, or £3 for a set of five from

- 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
 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)
Greg Birdseye (Newsletter Editor)
 9 Dell Way W13 8JH (8248 3973)
Paul Fitzmaurice
 18 Elers Road W13 9QD (8567 3024)
Mary Sergeant (co-opted)
 10 Eaton Rise W5 2ER (8997 1058)
Margaret Gold
 24 Lyncroft Gardens W13 9PU (8567 6158)
Tony Miller
 6 Winscombe Crescent W5 1AZ (8930 5130)
Jennifer Henley (minute secretary)

**Reading this and not a member?
 Why not join us?
 Phone 020 8567 4682 or see our website
 www.ealingcivicsociety.org**