



Summer 2005 Newsletter

Ealing Civic Society Events 2005

Tuesday 5 July, Annual Lecture, 8pm Telfer Room Ealing Town Hall -- speaker Charles Mynors: *Historic buildings & conservation--why bother?*

Saturday/Sunday 17/18 September: London Open House Weekend

Award Ceremony Thursday 20 October 2005 8.00pm Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall - speaker Nigel Burton, Chairman, Civic Trust

Ealing Civic Society Annual Public Lecture

Our annual lecture takes place this year on Tuesday July 5th at 8pm in the Telfer Room, Ealing Town Hall. This year's subject touches on a topic close to the hearts of our members – the preservation of buildings and localities that have a special character and significance that make Ealing distinctive. Our speaker Charles Mynors is a leading expert on conservation. Charles was, for a time, a conservation officer in local government; he is now a barrister in private practice specialising in planning and ecclesiastical law. He is the author of a number of books, including *Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*. He has written numerous articles, including the regular law column (*M'Learned Friend*) in *Context*, the Journal of the Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation. Some of you may have seen Charles as part of the team accepting the Society's Annual Award on behalf of St. Mary's Church last October.

Chairman's Introduction

We had a lively discussion at the AGM about the proposal for increasing the annual subscription from the current level of £5 (£10 for corporate members). In the absence of a quorum it was not possible to take a vote on the new subscription rate of £10 (£15). However, the committee undertook to reconsider the issue at its next meeting. Opinions were divided on the size of the increase -- some people agreed with

the Committee that the Society should be covering its basic outgoings whilst others considered that in the year it had received a generous bequest it was insensitive to double the subscription. The Committee discussed this at its meeting in June and agreed to revisit the issue at the next AGM on the basis of a subscription level to cover current outgoings. This would be around £7.50 a year if most members, including former life members, paid their subscriptions. However, it may need to be more if the current deficit in subscription income from members continued. Subscriptions for this year commencing 1 April 2005 therefore remain unchanged at £5 (individuals) £10 (corporate) with 'life members' not required to pay. In the light of the comments above if you haven't made arrangements to pay this year's subscription would you please do so as soon as possible. The address of the Membership Secretary is on page 4.

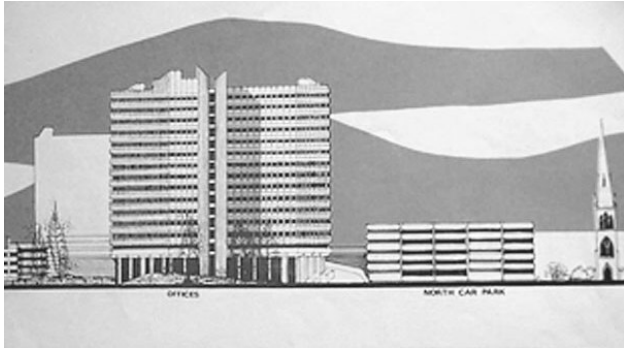


A Grade II listed lighting column in Ealing – a rare survivor and one of two restored following an ECS initiative

Ealing Broadway Centre redevelopment

The AGM had an interesting presentation from Eddie Tulasiewicz about the redevelopment of central Ealing from the late 1960s to create the present Ealing Broadway Centre which celebrated its official

opening by the Queen 20 years ago. By 1970 the area had become down at heel with a large area of derelict land behind the Broadway caused by bombing in the war and later demolition of sub-standard housing. Along with West Ealing the Greater London Council had designated the area a 'preferred office location' and in 1974 the Council produced phase one of its detailed planning scheme which comprised a 17-storey office block, a 10-storey block of flats and 2 multi storey car parks with a pedestrian underpass!



Ealing Broadway Centre as it might have been!

This was very much conventional thinking for town centre developments of the time but local amenity groups such as the Civic Society and Walpole Residents' Association formed an alliance to oppose the plans with the campaign slogan 'Put the Heart Back into Ealing'. The strength of this Alliance's arguments proved remarkably successful at the 1976 public inquiry and two years later the Secretary of State ruled against the Council's plans. Recognising the strength of 'people power' the council were at last prepared to listen. The Alliance's 'alternative plan' recognising a human scale and with more sensitive use of materials was largely adopted to form the Broadway Shopping Centre we see today.

Bob Gurd then brought the meeting up-to-date by outlining Ealing Centre Partnership's vision of the future of Ealing Centre. He said that Ealing faced some major threats and challenges to its future success, in particular from the development of White City Shopping Centre currently under construction. If Ealing doesn't improve there is a risk that people will go to other centres, which would lead to the economic decline of Ealing itself.

Yet Ealing provides a large number of jobs, a substantial shopping centre with a unique and distinctive character and education with cultural and entertainment facilities to rival many other London centres. In particular, the centre's open spaces give Ealing a distinctive character of space and place.

Local people say they want a quality centre with a better mix of uses, including shops, residential, leisure, offices and community facilities. People also support improved interchange facilities at Ealing Broadway station but they also wish to see traffic reduced and better access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport into the centre. Above all, they want a cleaner and more attractive environment in which to work and relax.

Ealing should not try to compete with White City or Brent Cross but should be more relaxed, less frenetic and be more akin to Richmond or Chiswick. Retailers should be more specialist and up-market to more closely reflect and cater for the needs of the residential hinterland. It should also offer a greater choice in leisure activities, particularly in the evening. The street scene must be upgraded and Ealing made more immediately welcoming to pedestrians.

In terms of development sites, physical links between the three sites north of Uxbridge Road should be maximised - the Arcadia Site, Dickens Yard (behind the Town Hall), and Ealing Broadway Station where the new Crossrail development will have an impact. Bob Gurd went on to explain the Partnership's ideas for these sites and for the Uxbridge Road and Sandringham Mews (behind the former Lamertons site). These were broadly endorsed by the meeting.

Ealing's Licensing Policy

While the problems of antisocial behaviour related to excess alcohol consumption were not a prominent election issue they have not gone away, and many uncertainties remain regarding the benefits of the Licensing Act 2003. At the local level Ealing Civic Society has played a major part in bringing about the inclusion of a Cumulative Impact Policy in the Borough's Licensing Policy. This policy applies to Central Ealing and can only be of limited duration. It remains to be seen whether it will be an effective tool in controlling the problems of most concern to local residents. During the consultation period in February seventy six information packs were sent to local traders of whom only three responded. All three supported the policy but the silence of the majority raises questions of the intentions of the licensed trade in general. Similar questions are raised nationally by the low level of applications to convert and vary existing licenses under the transitional arrangements of the Act. This may be related to uncertainties in the interpretation of the Act and it is known that a number of licensing solicitors disagree with the advice given by licensing authorities and in some

cases are taking action through the courts. To date Ealing has not been notified of any legal challenge to its policies.

In January the greater part of a consultation document produced jointly by the Department for Culture Media and Sport, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Office entitled "Drinking Responsibly: The Government's Proposals" discussed possible creation of alcohol disorder zones. It also expressed the Government's belief that the costs incurred should be recovered from the premises responsible for alcohol related disorder. In Ealing the police have started to progress through the Home Office an initiative to make Central Ealing an Alcohol Free Zone, which was supported by the Society and several residents' associations but as yet the outcome is unknown. At a practical level the presence of Community Support Officers on the streets has the potential to make a significant contribution to public order but they need greater powers of action and longer hours of operation.

On a more positive note, changes in the Use Classes Order came into effect on 21 April 2005. The breaking down of the old A3 class, which included in one group restaurants, cafés, pubs, bars and hot food takeaways, into three new classes should give the planning authorities more power in their efforts to secure a balance of uses in any given area. Some problems remain and, as always, new problems are created. While the primary use of the premises will be the crucial factor in determining the classification it is recognised that some establishments are hybrids changing from mainly providing food during the day to mainly providing drink at night. The classification of nightclubs remains a concern. The new Order confirms that they are not in any designated class and each application will have to be assessed with the full knowledge of its primary activity.

Against this increasingly complex background it is difficult to know whether any progress is being made in making the streets of Ealing once again pleasant and safe places where civic amenities can be enjoyed at all times by all people. In the past the system has favoured the trade and may still do so. Residents still have to give up either business or leisure time to represent their interest against those of a wealthy and powerful industry whose duty is to its shareholders and whose economic base is largely dependent upon the sales of alcohol. The fact that these problems are beginning to be recognised and more widely discussed may give some cause for optimism. Useful websites include those of the Institute of Alcohol

Studies and the Civic Trust at www.ias.org.uk and www.civictrust.org.uk which give a guide to local residents on objecting to applications.

Jim McLaughlin

Blue Plaques in Ealing

The lack of official GLC/English Heritage Blue Plaques in Ealing will be remedied during 2005 by the provision of three new plaques dedicated to famous individuals who have lived in the borough. Until now there has been only one Blue Plaque in Ealing which was erected by the GLC 28 years ago at 37 The Ridings, Ealing W5 on the Haymills estate and dedicated to Alan Blumlein, the inventor of stereo sound, 405-line TV, and H₂S - a specialist form of radar for bombers in World War II. Many will be aware that there are also several 'unofficial' blue plaques in Ealing which were erected privately. These include ones for Lady Byron, above the main entrance of Thames Valley University in South Ealing Road, for Frank Richards, the author of the 'Billy Bunter' stories, in the Broadway Shopping Centre and Arthur Haynes and Sid James, the well-known comics, in Gunnersbury Avenue.

The first of our trio of new Blue Plaques, dedicated to John Lindley, was unveiled on 17 May at Bedford House, The Avenue, W4 by Orphelia Lindley, one of his descendants, in the presence of about 50 interested onlookers from English Heritage, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, the Bedford Park Society and Ealing Civic Society. The plaque reads as follows: "John Lindley (1799-1865) Botanist and pioneer Orchidologist lived here from 1836 and died here". We were told that John Lindley saved Kew Gardens from being abandoned in 1836 and he subsequently donated his world famous herbarium to Kew Gardens. He was also Honorary Secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society, the first Professor of Botany at University College London, and author of many famous publications on plants including 'An Introduction to Botany' which forms the basis of botanical terminology used to-day in all English speaking countries.

English Heritage staff told me about the other two Blue Plaques to be erected shortly in Ealing at this event. The first will be dedicated to Sir Michael Balcon the film producer and erected, without an unveiling ceremony, during the first part of June on the façade of the 'White House' at Ealing Studios where he made many of his famous films. The second will be dedicated to Dorothea Lambert Chambers who was seven times ladies champion at Wimbledon between 1903-1914. It will be unveiled at 11.30am on Wednesday 27 July at St Matthew's

Vicarage, 7 North Common Road W5. Her father was Revd Henry Douglass, the first Vicar of St Matthew's Church from 1884-1916.

Michael Tiley

Proposed lime tree cull in Ealing streets

Earlier this year, officers of the Council put forward a proposal to cut down all the lime trees in Ealing's streets and replace them by small varieties to save money on maintenance. This proposal, which we have been campaigning against, has finally been turned down by the Council. The petitions, letters, and newspaper reports show that street trees are really appreciated. They provide a filter for vehicle fumes, shade which keeps down street temperatures thus contributing to a reduction of chemical smog; they also reduce the run-off of rain water into the sewers and so lower the risk of flooding.

New small varieties of trees would be liable to vandalism and would not make such a useful contribution to reducing pollution, flooding and carbon dioxide. More skilled but less frequent maintenance of our big trees would benefit the street scene because the current chopping makes them look deformed in winter. They have been saved - now they need to be allowed to look more attractive.

Above all our streets do need a regular planting programme of trees that will be useful in the long term, replacing those that cause damage or die. This will make dull streets attractive. There is a fund for street trees in memory of the Society's former Hon Secretary, Brian Harris. It is hoped to get some trees planted this autumn. At present funding stands at £500. If you wish to add to this please send a cheque to the Brian Harris Tree Fund at 72 The Knoll, W13 8HY.

Judy Harris

Nominate an entry for the Ealing Civic Society Award 2005

Each year Ealing Civic Society makes awards to recognise and encourage building and environmental projects that make a noteworthy contribution to the community in the London Borough of Ealing. The winners receive a certificate and may display a Society plaque commemorating the award.

The purpose of the Society's award is to stimulate interest among the people of Ealing in development and conservation projects, and to enable them to recognise and reward new buildings, refurbishments or restorations which make a positive contribution to the amenity of Ealing and its townscape. The Society aims to encourage a high standard of architecture,

design and fitness for purpose in buildings and other projects throughout the borough.

Awards will be made for schemes that enhance the environment by good design, landscaping, or service to the community of other kinds. They may include new buildings or those which have been substantially restored or refurbished, landscaping or townscape projects. Good design, fitness for purpose and flexibility in meeting changing needs are especially relevant. So too are the demonstration of energy efficiency, good pedestrian access, anti-pollution measures and the re-use of materials.

Please look carefully around your area in Ealing to see if there are any developments which you think should be entered for the award. Further details and application forms are available on our website or from Judy Harris (details below).

Open House Weekend 2005

Among the buildings in Ealing likely to be open on London Open House weekend (17/18 September) are the following: 14 South Parade, Bedford Park (this was very popular last year), Ealing and Acton Town Halls, the Hoover Building and other favourites which opened in previous years. The Open House team also to include some new entries this year which should appeal to those interested in new buildings. The usual wide range of walks – some originally instigated by the Society - will also be available. Full details will be provided in the press nearer the time.

2005/6 Executive Committee

The following members were elected to the Executive Committee at the last AGM:

Robert Gurd, 60 Beaufort Rd W5 3EA (020 8998 4417 - Chairman)

Huw Foxall, 27 Regal Close W5 2SB (Treasurer)
Judy Harris, 72 The Knoll W13 8HY (020 8997 8824 - Secretary)

Corinne Templer, 20 Mattock Lane W5 5BH

John Templeton, 5 Helena Road, W5 2RA

Michael Tiley, 30 Devonshire Road W5 4TP (Publicity officer)

Margaret Gold, 24 Lyncroft Gardens W13 9PU (Newsletter Editor)

Paul Fitzmaurice, 18 Elers Road, W13 9QD (020 8567 9024 - Membership Secretary)

Adrian Cook, 35 Brouncker Road W3 8AE

Tony Miller, 6 Winscombe Crescent W5 1AZ

Mary Sergeant, 10 Eaton Rise W5