



## Spring 2006 Newsletter

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### Ealing Civic Society Events 2006

#### **AGM**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm  
Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall  
Speakers from St George plc (preferred bidder, Dickens Yard development) - Regeneration Director, Charmaine Young, and Land Director, Malcolm Wood

#### **Annual Lecture**

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30 pm  
Telfer Room, Ealing Town Hall  
Speaker: Prof Malcolm Buchanan, Director – Colin Buchanan and Partners, London  
“Transport problems and policies in suburban London”

#### **Annual Award Ceremony**

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 7.30 pm

**NEW for 2006 – our meetings will start at 7.30 and end correspondingly earlier**

### **Chairman's Report**

Welcome to the Spring 2006 newsletter. This covers the Society's activities and current planning issues, including the redevelopment proposals for Dickens Yard, and the future of the former UGC cinema and Pitzhanger Manor.

We are very pleased to announce that the preferred bidder for Dickens Yard (St George) have agreed to address the AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> April to tell us more about their scheme, which has been revised in the light of further discussions with the Council.

Dickens Yard is probably the most important development in central Ealing since the Ealing Broadway Centre was built in the mid-1980s. St George was announced as the preferred bidder at the end of last year but the Council indicated there were significant problems with their proposals which needed to be addressed if they

were to be chosen as the Council's partner. There has since been a period during which negotiations have been taking place about changes to the original proposals to meet the council's concerns.

Unfortunately, these negotiations have been conducted behind closed doors, despite our efforts to become involved. However, we have learnt that there are likely to be changes to the block layout, servicing and parking, as well as a likely increase in density (already the highest of the four shortlisted bidders) to pay for the changes. Significantly, there have been extensive negotiations with Christ the Saviour church and school to ensure that their facilities integrate well into the development. The proposed town square between the church and the new development could be a significant new open space in the centre of Ealing, but it has to be done effectively and to the church's satisfaction.

A remaining unknown area is integration of the Town Hall into the development. The new scheme gives a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve the depressing rear aspect of the Town Hall, as well as to refurbish the tired public spaces inside the building itself - and possibly provide sufficient funds to enable major improvements such as reinstalling the organ from the South Bank University into Victoria Hall (see the Autumn 2005 Newsletter). Hopefully, we will hear more at our AGM, and you will have the opportunity to question St George at first hand about their revised proposals.

Also in the last newsletter we told you that the UGC cinema in New Broadway was on the market as a result of a condition of the takeover of the chain by Cineworld. We now know that the cinema has been bought by a UK subsidiary of the Irish Ward Anderson cinema operation called Empire Cinemas. We have talked to the chief executive of the new company about their plans for the cinema, which is currently very run

down, as evidenced by cordoned off seats and a temporary heating system. We have pointed out that Ealing deserves something much better and there are potential opportunities for linking up with Ealing Studios and the associated media studies activities within the Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College and Thames Valley University. Not surprisingly at this early stage, he was unable to give us much information about the company's plans, but there is likely to be some initial improvements whilst studies are undertaken on possible redevelopment of the site in the longer term. We will keep you informed of developments.

There is better news to report in relation to Pitzhanger Manor which has been in a similar state of uncertainty, partly as a result of the constant reorganisation of the responsible Council department. However, the new Head of Culture at Ealing Council has taken the initiative of setting up a stakeholder group (on which the Society and Walpole Residents' Association are represented) to discuss drawing up a conservation plan for the house and garden. A firm of consultants (Donald Insall Associates) has been appointed to carry out the work and is expected to report by late summer. There is around £0.25 million for the plan and associated initial refurbishment activities, in particular some urgent repairs to the buildings and structures in the grounds. We have always said that some of this money should be used to unlock substantial national lottery funding for more extensive refurbishment which would result in a complete overhaul of the building and surrounding park areas. Initiatives currently being considered are installation of floodlighting to the front of the building (there was a trial last Christmas of a possible scheme) and new signage to make the Manor and gardens more visible to the general public. A possible option is to install a visual 'feature' on the corner of Ealing Green, opposite the parade of shops, signposting the existence of the house and gardens which are currently rather hidden behind the front wall and gates. If you have any views on this please let us know.

On the Hanger Lane bridges replacement scheme, you will recall that the Society successfully negotiated - with much help from local councillors and residents' associations - an improvement to the original plans, particularly to the amount of exchange land offered up for Common land lost for the bridges work. There is

a substantial amount of legal and related activity remaining (including a public inquiry later this year because common land is involved) before any work can start on the ground. It is unlikely that work will start before autumn 2007, and the works themselves are expected to last around 18 months. This is likely to cause substantial disruption, although at all times at least one lane north and southbound will remain open to traffic.

On another ongoing topic, a substantial amount of your committee's time has been taken up on dealing with licensing hearings for public houses in the central Ealing. I am very pleased to say that the special area policy which the Society and affected residents' Associations fought long and hard for has had a significant effect. Jim McLaughlin gives a full report on this work below.

Finally, those of you who were present in January will know that the inaugural Janet Millar Memorial Lecture, on *20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings in Ealing*, was attended by a large audience. The Memorial Lecture might have been the first introduction for many of you to the very interesting series of talks at Ealing Central Library. Enclosed with the newsletter is the summer programme leaflet. As part of the continuing Janet Millar bequest programme ECS will be making a donation to Ealing Library Services for the purchase of books on an architectural/conservation theme.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM. Please note this starts at 7.30 pm - earlier than in previous years.

*Bob Gurd*

### **Meeting with Ealing Council**

In November, some members of the Executive Committee met Darra Singh, the new chief executive of Ealing Council, and Leo Thomson the council leader, at Corinne Templer's house in Mattock Lane. We had invited them to meet us in an informal setting, hopefully to establish a constructive relationship between ECS and the 'new faces' on the council. Topics raised covered both general issues and some specific concerns.

The general issues included the reported problems and delays on the Response Programme, particularly regarding the computer system at its heart. We were told that progress

was being made and there was no possibility of the programme being scrapped, although it may not fully achieve what was originally envisaged, following a review by the council's auditors. [Subsequent to our meeting, the council has decided not to go for the final stage of IT development, although still including the principal customer focused systems.] Other general issues included our concern about the lack of enthusiasm shown by some members of the Local Strategic Partnership and Ealing Centre Partnership. The council is now taking action to try to improve this situation.



*Darra Singh and Leo Thomson  
(photo Tony Miller)*

We also raised specific concerns about current hot issues like the Dickens Yard development proposals and the neglected state of Pitzhanger Manor, reported on by Bob Gurd above. On Dickens Yard we reiterated our representations made on the design proposals and particularly the importance of fully integrating the Town Hall into the chosen scheme. Leo Thomson said that the council too wanted a high level of urban design and that financial return to the Council would not be the overriding factor. On Pitzhanger Manor we emphasised that, despite ECS offering to be involved in finding ways to remedy the state of the building, we had not been approached by anyone in the council. We were assured that Pitzhanger is seen as the 'jewel in the crown' for Ealing and that priority would be given to its restoration and promotion. Overall, we felt that it was a helpful meeting and we expressed the hope that we could have further constructive dialogue.

*Greg Birdseye*

## **Licensing**

A sad comment on the former 'Queen of the suburbs' can be found in the *Ealing Times* of March 9. Under the heading *Revellers: 'Leave booze at home'* a police spokesman comments "In Ealing Broadway the main concern is monitoring drinkers coming out of pubs and clubs, trying to minimise the possibility of bottles being used as weapons". In an attempt to reduce the adverse effects of alcohol abuse, Ealing Civic Society has supported Ealing Council's 'cumulative impact policy' and objected to all applications for longer drinking hours in the Central Ealing Zone. In each case this has involved presenting the case before a sub-committee of the Council. Because of the large number of applications involved, some cases have yet to be heard, but in general the sub-committees have upheld the policy and refused applications for extended hours. It is worth noting that in two cases the application was withdrawn. At the time of writing, another two of the applicants have appealed against the Council's decision. In one of these cases the applicant (Edwards) was allowed a limited extension of its operating hours, and the other is still in progress. There is, however, a concern that much of the problem we now face is the result of allowing incremental extensions over the years, either of trading hours or premises capacity, and the results of the present changes need to be carefully monitored.

One of the problems your Society faces when trying to uphold an objection before the sub-committees is the lack of evidence. Frequently the council's Environmental Health Officer will report that no objections have been recorded. Any resident who feels they are suffering from noise from any licensed premises should contact Environmental Health on 020 8825 8111. The line is open between 0830 and 2400 hours Monday – Friday. In addition, on Fridays and Saturdays between 2300 and 0400 hours, contact 020 8825 5000 for both noise and other problems.

*Jim McLaughlin*

## **Commemorative Plaques in Ealing**

Ealing is going to have a fifth English Heritage Blue Plaque in addition to those mentioned in previous articles. Currently we have plaques dedicated to:

- Alan Blumlein at 37 The Ridings W5;

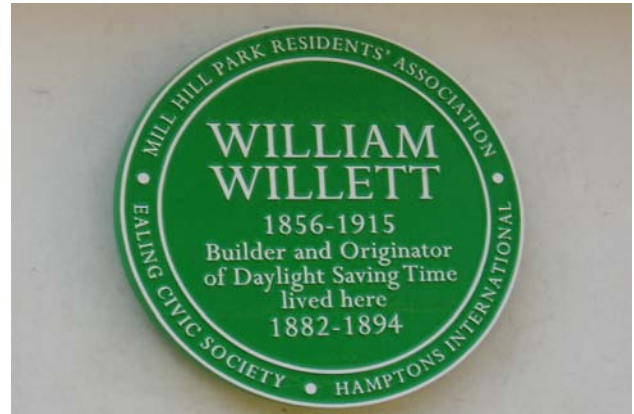
- Professor John Lindley at Bedford House, The Avenue W4;
- Sir Michael Balcon at The White House, Ealing Studios, Ealing Green W5; and
- Dorothea Lambert-Chambers at St Matthew's Vicarage, 7 North Common Road W5.

English Heritage have now written to say that they have shortlisted the Society's suggestion that a Blue Plaque should be erected to John Haywood Compton at his former home at 37 Audley Road W5 on the Haymills estate, where he lived from 1931 with his two sisters until his death in 1956. He built his famous cathedral, church, cinema and concert pipe organs, and also electronic organs, at the John Compton Organ Works at Chase Road, Park Royal.

A Compton cinema organ was installed at the Forum Cinema opposite Ealing Town Hall in 1934 and it was subsequently moved in the 1960s to the prisoners' chapel at Wormwood Scrubs Prison where it is still used to accompany services. A Compton Church organ was installed at Ealing Abbey in the 1930s but was destroyed by enemy action during the war and replaced by a smaller organ built by Rushworth & Dreaper. One of the few Compton Organs still in existence in Ealing is to be found at St Gabriel's Church in Acton. Possibly the most famous Compton Cinema organ in the country is still used on a regular basis at the Odeon Leicester Square for film premieres and special concerts.

Unfortunately it will take about three years for the new Blue Plaque to be fully researched, constructed and erected as there is quite a backlog of other approved Blue Plaques ahead of us in the queue!

Our first ECS Green Plaque was unveiled on 23 March at 16 Avenue Crescent, Mill Hill Park, Acton W3. The new plaque – in memory of William Willett, the originator of daylight saving time - has been jointly sponsored by ECS, Mill Hill Park Residents' Association and Hamptons International who kindly paid for the plaque as they occupy William Willett's former estate offices near Sloane Square in Chelsea. Appropriately, the unveiling took place in bright spring sunshine just a few days before the clocks went forward.



Do let me have any suggestions for other famous people or buildings which might be commemorated with an English Heritage or ECS plaque. Nevil Shute, Gustav Holst and Dame Margot Fonteyn have been suggested as possibilities, as well as Ealing's first Council Offices at 1 The Mall W5. These buildings are now occupied by the National Westminster Bank and were designed in 1874 by Charles Jones, Ealing Council's first surveyor, architect and engineer. They were superseded by the present Town Hall in 1888, also designed by Charles Jones.

*Mike Tiley*

### **The 2005 Annual Award Ceremony**

The Society's annual award ceremony took place in Ealing Town Hall on 20th October last year. The panel of judges consisted of John Hummerston, Gavin Leonard and Jan Bienkowski.

John Hummerston, local architect and longstanding member of the Civic Society, gave an illustrated presentation of the six shortlisted entries:

- the redevelopment of Brentside High School W7;
- refurbishment of Edwardian shops and flats in Ealing Green W5;
- Ealing Gateway office development, Uxbridge Road W5;
- a refurbished Victorian house, 37 Cowper Road W3;
- redevelopment of Ravenor Primary School, Greenford; and
- conversion to a house of the Victorian Oddfellows Hall in Fletcher Road W3.

A 'Highly Commended' was awarded to Oddfellows Hall, for an imaginative conversion of

the building, which almost certainly saved a well known local landmark from demolition.



*Oddfellows Hall conversion*

Commendations were also awarded to 36 Cowper Road, and Ravenor Primary School. The 'People's Award' - the result of the Ealing Gazette's phone vote - went to the Ealing Gateway office development which has provided a well mannered office block filling an unsightly gap along the Uxbridge Road.

The presentations were made by the guest of honour, Nigel Burton, Chairman of the Civic Trust and former Development Director for Waitrose plc. In his address, he praised Ealing Civic Society for upholding the Civic Trust ethos - one of 850 civic societies in the country affiliated to the Civic Trust. Founded by the late Duncan Sandys MP in 1957 as a lobbying organisation to champion good design and environment, the Trust has been operating its own annual Civic Trust Awards for 47 years. The Trust acts as an umbrella body giving advice to its affiliated societies and was responsible for the Civic Amenities Act 1968 which empowered local councils to designate conservation areas. Nigel gave examples of the Trust's ongoing work including the annual Heritage Open Days, its monthly electronic newsletter 'Civic Focus', participation in research projects such as the recent study of the Evening Economy, and the annual 'Green Flag' awards for well maintained public parks. His final word was a plea for societies to involve young people in the Civic Trust movement. Very few societies had 25 year olds and teenagers within their membership, yet today's young will be the future guardians of the environment. Here was a

challenge for the Trust's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2007.

Our 2006 award will as usual take place in October, but as an innovation this year (and reflecting Nigel Burton's comments) the Society has also decided to promote a 'Young People's Design Award' to encourage young people to think about improvements that could be made to their local environment. Information has been sent to all secondary schools in the borough, and interest is growing. Indeed, two entries have already been submitted at the time of writing.

*John Templeton*

### **Subscriptions**

The new membership year starts on 1 April. If you don't pay by standing order your subscription becomes payable. This remains at £5 (households) and £10 (corporate) for this year (although see below re proposals for 2007). Please pass on your subscription to Paul Fitzmaurice as soon as possible, either at the AGM or to the address below. Cheques are payable to 'Ealing Civic Society'.

There are still many members who have not paid last year's subscription, and in some cases those of previous years. Please contact Paul if you wish to ascertain how much is outstanding. Alternatively please pass on a payment of say £10 or £15 to Paul and he will then advise you of your present status.

Finally, we can't emphasise highly enough the value of completing a Gift Aid Form if you pay basic rate tax on your income. Completion of this form will cover you for all future years' subscriptions. If you haven't completed a form (or don't think you have) please contact:

Paul Fitzmaurice – Membership Secretary  
18 Elers Road London W13 9QD  
Phone: 020 8567 3024  
Email: [paulfitzmaurice1948@hotmail.com](mailto:paulfitzmaurice1948@hotmail.com)

Members will recall that at last year's AGM the resolution to increase subscriptions was not passed due to an insufficient number of members being present at the meeting. The Executive Committee has now re-examined this whole issue in some detail, taking fully into account members' comments made at the AGM.

The resolution contained in the AGM Notice below indicates the proposed increases. These proposals have the full support of the Executive Committee (and are in fact lower than those proposed last year). For those paying by standing order there is the benefit of a lower rate, to recognise the cost savings to the Society by using this method. For procedural purposes it is proposed these changes will come into effect from 1st January 2007 so that from then on the Society membership year will coincide with the Society's accounting year.

We recognise that having to amend the Constitution simply to change subscription rates

is cumbersome. We therefore propose to amend the Constitution to provide that, in future, recommendations by the Executive Committee to amend the members' subscription rates will be put to a general meeting of members, for approval by a simple majority vote of those present.

The Executive Committee believes these proposals to be fair and reasonable and commend them to the membership. We sincerely hope that all members will make an effort to attend the AGM, to air their views if they wish, so that we have sufficient numbers to put the resolution to the meeting.

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2006 AGM will be held  
in the Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall 7.30 pm, Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006

### Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Report for the year 2005
3. Adoption of the Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report for 2005
5. Adoption of the Treasurer's Report
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Election of Officers:

*Currently:*

Chairman – Bob Gurd

Vice-Chairman – vacant

Secretary – Judy Harris

Treasurer – Huw Foxall

Membership Secretary – Paul Fitzmaurice    Newsletter Editor – Margaret Gold

8. Election of other Committee Members:

*Currently* - Adrian Cook (standing down), Jim McLaughlin, Tony Miller, Mary Sergeant, Corinne Templer, John Templeton, Mike Tiley, Greg Birdseye (co-opted), Ann Chapman (co-opted).

In accordance with the constitution, further nominations for election to the Executive Committee may be made by members of the Society. They must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting, supported by a seconder (also a member of the Society), and the consent of the nominee must first have been obtained. If the nominations exceed the number of vacancies, a ballot shall take place.

9. Resolution – see below.
10. Motions and any other business submitted to the Chairman in writing prior to the meeting.
11. Talk by representatives from St George plc on the Dickens Yard development proposals.

### **Resolution: Amend paragraph 4 of the Society's Constitution to read:**

“As from 1 January 2007 the Annual Subscription shall be:

- Households: £8 (or £7 if paying by standing order)
- Businesses and associations (corporate membership): £16 (or £14 if paying by standing order).

Thereafter, the Executive Committee shall make recommendations for changes to subscription rates at a General Meeting, to be approved by a simple majority vote of those present”.