



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

Spring 2011

Ealing Civic Society Events 2011

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 5th April, 7.30 pm
 Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall
 Speaker: Peter Hounsell "The changing face of Ealing: a fifty year retrospect 1960 – 2010"

The ECS Annual Lecture

Tuesday 7th June, 7.30 pm
 Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall
 Speaker: Sir Donald Insall CBE: "Living Buildings and Architectural Conservation"

ECS members' guided visit to Northala Fields

Saturday 25th June (further details to be announced)

The ECS Annual Awards Ceremony

November (date/time to be finalised)
 Speaker: Torin Douglas, Media Correspondent, BBC News

Check our website for full details and updates.

Thoughts from the chairman

Why do we carry on in the face of potentially rapacious developers, sometimes intransigent council members and officers, and general public apathy about a perceived spiral of decline for the 'Queen of the Suburbs'? It's certainly a valid question, and indeed one which we on the Executive Committee ask ourselves from time to time. But yes, we do feel it is worth the time and effort.

ECS has fought its battles on behalf of Ealing for over 40 years now, and we hope to continue for a good few years more, as potential and actual threats to our borough continue to emerge. And we can justifiably say that we have made an impact and produced

positive and continuing benefits. So we will always encourage new members to join us, and of course existing members to continue with us: you originally joined because you clearly care about the future of Ealing, and we need as many members as possible to support our work.

The historic role of our predecessors in safeguarding the centre of Ealing (the Ealing Broadway shopping centre saga) is well documented, and over the years this work has continued. In particular, recently we have opposed major changes which would have destroyed the character of Ealing, for example by making submissions to the planning inquiry over the proposed Arcadia development. Members of the executive committee continue to put their own time into commenting on planning strategy documents and on individual planning applications.

In addition, members will know that we seek to encourage good architecture and landscape design in the borough through our Annual Awards scheme, and the outcome of the 2010 competition is described later. We also lobby for commemorative 'blue' plaques, and present our own plaques for use on buildings associated with historic figures, most recently for example the one for the assassinated Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, who lived on Ealing Common. We have an ongoing programme of organised talks, lectures and tours which we hope are of interest to members, and not least we send you these printed newsletters three times a year and regular e-mail updates to keep you up to date on developments. We also have a useful fact-filled website.

All of which, we hope you will agree, is a good reason to carry on, and is of course excellent value for the annual subscription outlay of

little more than the cost of a week's newspapers!

Empire cinema site

There was a flurry of activity at the cinema site just before Christmas when the unsightly piles of rubble were levelled. But our excitement was quickly deflated when we learned that Empire Cinemas were planning to build a temporary car park rather than start building work for the new cinema complex which received revised planning consent in the autumn. The new scheme is similar to the previous one except that some of the screens are smaller to allow more café and other concession areas to be built. Happily, the Council stepped in to prevent construction of the car park, and the latest public statement from Empire says that they plan to start work on the complex later this year. But then they said that in 2009, and in 2010...

Hanger Lane houses

As we reported in an earlier newsletter, Genesis Homes withdrew their previous planning application to demolish three houses in Hanger Lane and two in Madeley Road. Instead, they consulted the Society and local residents over a revised plan which would include retention of the Madeley Road houses (with extensions at the rear) and rebuilding the Hanger Lane houses in a form which would largely replicate the existing frontages, again with rear extensions. A new house would be built in Hanger Lane at the rear of 85 Madeley Road in a form which would again replicate the existing frontages. A new planning application is due shortly, but the proposals are likely to be a great improvement on the original.



One of the once-fine houses on Hanger Lane subject to the latest proposals

Dickens Yard developments

A large hole to accommodate a two-storey basement is now visible on the site, and demolition of 2-12 New Broadway has started.

A temporary sales office has been set up in the Old Fire Station on Longfield Avenue, pending construction of a more substantial sales office in New Broadway.



The Dickens Yard basement taking shape

Pitzhanger Manor and Walpole Park

The council plans the restoration and improvement of the manor house, gardens and Walpole Park, restoring and interpreting historic links and features. A consultation exercise on detailed proposals for the park was held earlier in the year. The council submitted a successful round one application to the *Parks for People* programme managed by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2009 and a round two bid for the park is expected to be submitted shortly. A separate round one application to the HLF for the house was made at the end of last year.

Haven Green Village Green

Following pressure from local residents and ourselves the council has agreed to refer the issue of designation of Haven Green as a village green to the Secretary of State. This will mean that a planning inspector will consider the case at a public inquiry.

51 Drayton Green, West Ealing

Built at the turn of the 20th century, this was originally St Magdalena's home for 'fallen women'. It has been derelict for the last ten years or so and is now owned by a housing association that wishes to demolish it to build flats and houses on the site. As the building is one of the few of character around Drayton Green, the Society sought its listing last year but this was unfortunately refused. However, during its assessment, English Heritage discovered that the chapel (in separate church ownership) was an early building designed by Sir Ninian Comper, the well-known church architect, and was listed grade II.



51 Drayton Green, boarded up and awaiting its fate

Together with West Ealing Neighbours we have since been trying to get the home 'locally listed' in order to give it some limited protection, but despite the active involvement of a local ward councillor, the Council has been very dilatory in doing anything. As we go to press, however, the Council has now belatedly recommended its addition to the local list of protected buildings, but even this may prove too late because the housing association has indicated it wishes to demolish the building as soon as possible, and currently there is nothing stopping them from doing so.

St Mary's Square lighting

Those of you who know St Mary's Square (actually, more of a triangle, near St Mary's Parish Church in South Ealing) will be aware that it has no street lighting other than that from nearby street lamps in St Mary's Road. Following a suggestion from one of our members, we have proposed that one of the surplus cast-iron columns from elsewhere in Ealing should be restored and reinstalled at this location with a Victorian lantern. Provided that residents are content with the proposal, the cost will be met by the local Ward Forum. The end result will be similar to the restored columns in Hanwell.

I would like to encourage all of you to come to our annual general meeting. Our speaker this year is Peter Hounsell, who recently retired after 40 years service with Ealing Council library service. Peter will talk on "The changing face of Ealing: a fifty year retrospect 1960 - 2010".

Finally, this is the last newsletter to be edited by Greg Birdseye who has been doing the job for the last five years or so. We are extremely grateful to him for having done so and quite understand that he wishes to pass the reins over.

ECS's financial position and our subscription rates

Earlier this year we carried out a wide-ranging review of the Society's financial position. On one measure our finances are healthy, but the picture is a little more complicated: we are currently buoyed up by 'one-off' income received some years ago in the form of two legacies, of £14,000 in 2004 and £1,000 in 2006.

Neither of the donors - long-standing past members of the Society - set any condition on how the money should be spent. The committee at the time felt it should in principle not be used for ordinary running costs like newsletter printing and postage and instead be primarily for special items of expenditure - as much as anything else because this might provide more lasting remembrance of the donors.

As part of the review we have looked back over the accounts since 2004 to identify historically which items of one-off expenditure might reasonably be considered as suitable to have been funded by the legacies. The main items thus identified are: the implementation of our much-improved website (although not its annual running costs); an initial donation towards the setting up of Civic Voice as a successor to the now defunct Civic Trust; and the cost of funding our commemorative plaques. As a result of this exercise we have estimated that the amount of the legacy money now remaining is about £12,800.

We have now decided to take this further, and formalise management of our finances into two parts, a General Fund and a Legacies Fund, confirming the principle of using the latter only for special items. Our accounts for 2010 showing the position of the two funds separately will be available at the AGM. The General Fund shows a deficit of £600. The accounts for 2011 are likely to show a similar deficit on the General Fund, and the position is unlikely to improve in subsequent years.

Currently our annual subscriptions are £7 per household by standing order (SO) or £8 by cash or cheque, and £14/£16 for corporate bodies. These rates were introduced in 2007, the household rate having been held at £5 for many years before then. We are suffering from the same financial pressures as everyone else - by way of increased printing and postage costs, for example. We have looked carefully at ways of saving money but since so much of the work is done on a voluntary basis by our Trustees (Executive Committee members)

there seems to be little scope for making economies on expenditure which we believe is already for essentials only. Accordingly, a proposal will be put to the AGM to increase the subscription to £10 per household (SO) and £12 (cash or cheque), and £17/20 for corporate bodies.

There are however two further considerations: first, a subscription increase - if approved at the AGM - could not take effect until January 2012, by which time our finances will have deteriorated further; and second, some of our members (around 25) have even now not yet adjusted their SOs to the current rate of £7.

At the AGM the committee therefore proposes to invite members to help the Society's funding position by anticipating the new subscription rates (assuming that they are approved). Those whose standing orders fall in the latter half of this year (i.e. those which have not already been paid) could adjust their SO to £10 immediately, and those who have already paid for this year at the current rate (or the previous rate) could choose to make an additional one-off 'donation' up to the proposed new level (or more if they felt able to), at the same time as adjusting their SO for next year.

We hope all members will be sympathetic to these proposals, both in relation to the Legacies Fund and to the subscription increases. Our Treasurer Robin Roads will be presenting the accounts at the AGM and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

If you do not yet have an SO and would like to pay your subscription electronically from your bank account, the Society's bank details are: sort code 30-92-82; account number 2420491. Please include your surname in the reference; otherwise we won't be able to identify your payment. Those already paying by SO are welcome to adjust their payment online and there is no need to inform the Treasurer.

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Innovative school building wins 2010 ECS Annual Award

Bettany Hughes, the historian and broadcaster, presented our 2010 Annual Award at a presentation ceremony at Ealing Town Hall on 4th November. The six shortlisted buildings were described by a member of the ECS Executive Committee, Greg Birdseye, before the winner was revealed. Buildings on the shortlist were assessed for their design, fitness for purpose, contribution to the landscape and a range of other factors

including energy efficiency, pedestrian access, anti-pollution measures and the re-use of materials. Having visited all the contenders our two judges, local architects Franklyn Nevard and Anthony Ferguson, decided that the Award should go to John Perryn School, a new pathfinder primary school in Acton, where a 1930s building has been replaced by attractive spaces for formal and informal teaching and learning, plus a vulnerable children's unit.



The new John Perryn School in Acton



Phil Portwood, chair of John Perryn school governors, receives the ECS Award plaque and certificate from Bettany Hughes (photo: T. Doran)

The judges also awarded commendations to two entries:

- Jubilee Gardens Health Centre and Library is a replacement for existing clinic and library buildings in Southall. It contains space for two GP practices and other clinic facilities including audiology, podiatry, and midwifery, together with a branch library and at one end of the building.
- Northolt Leisure Centre is a replacement for the old Swimarama which closed in 2007. The new centre has two pools, a large gym and dance studio, plus a library, cafe and community hall.

The shortlist also included two other interesting buildings: one of Ealing's 'hidden

gems', St Mary's Church Northolt, a Grade I listed church, partly dating from 13th century, has been beautifully restored, including replacing the chancel ceiling and one window, and repairs to stonework, windows, spire, roof and guttering. Northolt Library has been remodelled as a community hub providing for a wide range of library, learning and community activities.

As in previous years the *Ealing Gazette* also ran an online poll for the 'People's Prize' from our shortlist. This was awarded to the new Sixth Form Centre at Notting Hill and Ealing High School. A former Westminster City Council children's home has been extensively remodelled and converted into seminar rooms, a multi-gym, common room, café and reception area.



The new 6th form centre at Notting Hill School

After the awards had been presented, Bettany Hughes gave a lively and entertaining talk about why she loves living in Ealing. She was educated at Notting Hill and Ealing School – the *Ealing Gazette* prize-winner – and has chosen to live here with her family. Her writing and television work is largely concerned with Greek and Roman history, and she introduced us to the Greek word *idiotes* referring to a person who did not participate in the political or public life of their city state, and from which we derive the word 'idiot'. She extended a possible parallel at this point!

Bettany ended her talk by proposing a toast to Ealing. We all followed suit with wine and mince pies. There was also a long queue to purchase a signed copy of Bettany's latest book: *The hemlock cup: Socrates, Athens and the search for the good life*. The large pile brought along from Pitshanger Bookshop soon sold out.

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Planning issues

A major consultation exercise has just finished on the *Local Development Framework* (LDF) which is intended to guide development in Ealing for the years up to 2026. The LDF consists of a suite of plans and other documents, and the Society has submitted comments and objections on each one:

- The **Development Strategy**, which was at its final stage of consultation, sets out the spatial vision and proposals for the future development of the borough. Our primary concerns are that the Crossrail stations – especially Ealing Broadway and West Ealing – would be a focus for a large amount of residential development which could result in high density redevelopment of conservation areas, with inadequate provision for sites for schools, health and leisure. We objected to targets set for housing which seem excessive. Retail targets seem over-optimistic while those for office floorspace are misleading. These targets are linked to the Mayor of London's spatial development strategy document, the *London Plan*, which has already been subject to an Examination in Public. Ealing Council proposes the Development Strategy should be subject to Examination in Public in the summer of 2011.
- The **Development Sites Schedule**, which is at an earlier consultation stage, sets out the planning requirements for key sites with development potential, showing where development is likely to take place. Our concerns are that the development potential of many sites had been exaggerated, with housing totals suggested which ignore local character, conservation areas, locally listed buildings and the amenity required by the safeguarded existing *Unitary Development Plan* (UDP) policies. These last will still be relevant until mid-2013 when the documents that make up the LDF will be adopted.
- The **Development Management document** will be used to guide decisions on planning applications. Government Planning Statements and the London Plan apply first but local policies are provided where the council considers the unique characteristics of Ealing requires a more distinctive approach. We made many detailed comments, including about inadequate protection for conservation areas and for gardens (which were recently classified as greenfield sites by the Government), and about ignoring some advice in the London Plan in relation to tall buildings.

- The **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** outlines the facilities needed to support the target population expansion proposed for the borough. The school proposals are for a limited period only and involve loss of playground space or community centres. Other facilities also seem inadequate.
- The **Statement of Community Involvement** sets out standards for community involvement in development planning and management. It has been updated to change procedures on consultation on planning applications to cut postal consultation. The *Localism Bill* currently being considered by Parliament may involve further change.

In addition to this major effort on the LDF, we will also be commenting on Ealing's **Future for Transport Local Implementation Plan (LIP)** which sets out how Ealing proposes to implement the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy (MTS) in its area, as well as other locally and sub-regionally important goals. The LIP is a statutory document, prepared under Section 145 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. Consultation on this started in January and once adopted the plan will be relevant for three years only.

The Society's responses on these important documents set the context for our comments on a number of other recent planning applications and proposals:

The Acton Town Hall site

A report to progress new facilities on the Acton Town Hall site was approved by Ealing Council's Cabinet last November. The proposals include a 25m swimming pool, training pool, fitness suite, community facilities, library, day-care facilities and satellite office space for Adults, Children's and Families services. The Town Hall, swimming baths chimney and existing library are Grade II listed and it is proposed to adapt these to alternative uses. The swimming baths and the Kings Rooms fronting the High Street - which are only locally listed - would be demolished.

The proposals also cover the Priory Community Centre (locally listed) and this site would be sold for housing unless it is needed for school use. The Passmore Edwards Library fronting High Street/ Winchester Street would be sold subject to planning permission for retail or restaurant use. Community facilities and a library would be housed in the Town Hall extension on the High Street which has two floors, including the assembly hall with a stage

for events. The old Town Hall would be sold for conversion to flats.



Acton swimming baths – destined for demolition?

A public consultation on the proposals is underway until 25th March. Our current concerns are the possible loss of the assembly hall, especially if a mezzanine floor were inserted, the limited amount of community space to be shared with a new library, and the sale and conversion of the town hall offices for flats. This would leave the former Acton Council chamber - probably the most attractive room in the building - isolated without a suitable community use. The King's rooms with their interesting facade still have some original features on the first floor worth retaining.

Westel House

The latest proposal is for a 19/23-storey block of flats, a hotel and some affordable housing. Our objection describes this as an unattractive high rise residential development with facades with gimmicky window shapes, an alien roof line and the loss of important employment land from the town centre office corridor. The proposed hotel would increase the permissions in the town centre from three currently under construction to four. If correctly calculated, the residential densities seem too high when compared with the relevant tables in the *London Plan*. The proposed flats would have inadequate amenity for residents with overlooking, over-shadowing and a lack of open space in an area of deficiency. They would increase demand for healthcare and for places in local schools which lack space for expansion.

42 Madeley Rd W5

There is a proposal for three houses in the rear garden of a double fronted house in an area which, although not yet a conservation area, is adjacent to the listed Ealing Village. We objected to it on grounds of its impact on

surrounding flats and gardens and as undesirable backland development with a narrow and difficult access.

Student accommodation at Victoria Road, Park Royal

Developers Goldcrest wish to develop yet more student accommodation near to North Acton Station. There are two adjacent vacant sites on what used to be industrial land but is now part of the so called Southern Gateway, north of the A40. Recently built tall flats and a high rise student block under construction would be shaded and overlooked by any new blocks built on the vacant land. There is no Public Open Space and the area is polluted by traffic fumes. We attended an exhibition of proposals and objected to the concentration of so much student accommodation in one location without appropriate facilities, and the impact of the blocks on the residential use to the north. The consultants have responded saying the scheme is being redesigned - including reducing the height of the proposed development - but they still want responses about what local people would like to see at ground floor level.

News in brief

Gunnersbury update

Our society 'Gunnersbury Walk and Talk' last September proved very popular with members, indicating the high level of concern about the future of the many beautiful listed buildings which continue to crumble, and for the deteriorating historic landscape. English Heritage have included it was one of their top dozen 'at risk' properties in England, and according to a recent report by Ealing Council, they consider it "one of the most sensitive and complex cases in the region".

Ealing Council is now fully committed to the regeneration of the park. It is working with Hounslow Council to create a project team to lead a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in November. Building on the 2009 options appraisal by Jura Consultants the project team will buy in further advice to survey the condition of the buildings and the landscape, and investigate the feasibility of the museum. The intention is to go out to public consultation in August this year before submitting the bid in November. The outcome will be known in April 2012.

Meanwhile many visitors to the park will welcome the new lavatory block close to the children's play area, which opened in late

2010. The old block has been demolished. All the work was funded by Ealing Council.



The very attractive (and very welcome!) new facilities at Gunnersbury Park

Plaque News

We continue to explore the potential for erecting our own commemorative plaques. The two most promising are for **Fred Perry** at the Brentham Club in Meadvale Road W5, and for **Winnie the Pooh** near to The Elms at Twyford (C of E) High School in Acton.

We understand that an English Heritage Blue Plaque has now been approved for erection at Fred Perry's former home at 223 Pitshanger Lane, and ideally we would like to put up an ECS Plaque at the Brentham Club - where he trained and played tennis - at the same time. Watch this space for news of the unveiling date.

August 2011 will be the 90th anniversary of the 'birth' of Winnie the Pooh when he was made in the Alpha Works of J.K. Farnell & Co Ltd beside the Elms, before being bought for Christopher Robin Milne from Harrods. Approaches are being made to the Milne Foundation to see if it would be willing to pay for the plaque. After we have finalised the funding details, however, we still need to obtain permissions from the site owners.

This year's library lectures

Enclosed with this newsletter you will have found information about a very interesting series of lectures at Ealing library. The Spring series is already part way through but members might like to put in their diaries the Walpole Friends lecture by our own Paul Fitzmaurice on 7th April. Talking from his immediate local knowledge, Paul will be telling us the story of Lammas and Walpole parks.

Vacancy for Publicity Officer

We are looking for a publicity officer for the Society to replace Mike Tiley who has filled the role for many years and now feels it is time to step down. Ideally suiting someone who has experience with dealing with the media, the role would include liaising with the Ealing Gazette and other local press, as well as maintaining/raising the Society's profile

generally. If you think you might be interested please feel free to discuss the role with our chairman Robert Gurd on 8998 4417.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The 2011 AGM will be held in the Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall
Tuesday 5th April 2011, 7.30 pm

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Report for 2010
3. Adoption of the Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report for 2010
5. Adoption of the Treasurer's Report
6. Subscriptions (see below)
7. Appointment of Auditors
8. Election of Officers:

Currently:

Chairman – Robert Gurd
Vice-Chairman – vacant
Secretary – Judy Harris
Treasurer – Robin Roads

9. Election of other committee members

The following current committee members have indicated a willingness to stand for a further year: Corinne Templer (Vice President), Deirdre McClellan (Membership), Tony Miller, Mike Tiley, Paul Fitzmaurice, Maggie Gold, Philippa Dolphin (Web manager).

In accordance with the constitution, further nominations for election to the committee may be made by members of the Society. They must be submitted in writing to the Secretary [Judy Harris, 72 The Knoll, Ealing W13 8HY] at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting, supported by a seconder who is also a member of the Society. The consent of the nominee must first have been obtained. If the nominations exceed the number of vacancies, a ballot shall take place.

10. Motions and any other business submitted to the Chairman in writing prior to the meeting.
11. Talk by Peter Hounsell: "The changing face of Ealing: a fifty year retrospect 1960 – 2010"

Re agenda item 6: Subscription Levels and Resolution to Amend ECS Constitution

The executive committee recommends that Paragraph 4 of the Constitution be deleted and replaced by the following:

"As from 1st January 2012 the Annual Subscription shall be:

Households: £12 (or £10 if paying by standing order)

Businesses and associations (corporate membership): £20 (or £17 if paying by standing order)

The Committee shall make recommendations for changes to subscriptions at a General Meeting to be approved by a simple majority."