

# **NEWSLETTER**

**6/93**

**Dec. 1993**

**WISHING YOU  
A**



**CHRISTMAS**

## Editorial

It has become a tradition of this Society, that every year we produce a Newsletter which is delivered to everyone in our area, regardless of whether or not they subscribe to or support the Society.

The Society is primarily a residents association and the point of a general Newsletter is twofold. Partly it is to let every one know that it is alive and well and kicking, by bringing together in one document an overview of the years activities. And, if having read the Newsletter you agree with the sort of things we are doing and are not yet a subscribing member, you have a once a year golden opportunity to join at a discount of 50%. Just complete the form on the last page and pop it through the letterbox of your friendly Road Representative (see page 11).

If there are issues which concern you that are not being covered, but you think they should be addressed, then please say so. Without feedback, the Officers of the Society can only do what they believe is best for the area. So please speak up. Noises of approval as well as criticism would be appreciated.

## Dates for the Diary

All meetings start at 8 pm and are held in the Bromley Court Hotel.

Thursday 6th January - Members meeting, Farnborough room.

Thursday 3rd March - Annual General Meeting, Wellington room.

For the first part of the AGM we normally have a guest speaker to talk on a local issue or general interest subject. If anyone knows of a good speaker with an interesting subject, please let either the Secretary or the Chairman know as soon as possible.

Peter Pain (Editor)

## Environmental Issues

Many people mocked when Bromley started their Clean and Green campaign - especially as it coincided with local elections. But, to be fair, it is still going strong and has by no means run out of steam.

### Plant a Tree Scheme

During the Hurricane in 1987, Bromley like many other areas lost thousands of mature trees. Since then the Council alone have planted over 10,000 new trees in the streets as well as 75,000 in their parks and woodlands.

They now want to widen the involvement and are looking for ideas for further planting. If you have any ideas or want to become involved in any way, contact the Plant a Tree line on 081-313 4470. A whole series of events are planned throughout the winter and next spring.

### Recycling Xmas Trees

In a similar vein, Bromley are again running a Xmas tree recycling service. From the 3rd - 9th of January a variety of places will be open where your unwanted Xmas tree can be shredded and the chippings used for tree planting schemes. If you want to know more, call 081- 313 4510-3 during office hours.

### Dog Control

From the 1st September 1993, Bromley introduced a new Bye Law making it an offence for owners to allow dogs to foul any pavement, alley or roadway, maintained by the Council. The maximum fine is £500. The sole exception allowed is for guide dogs for registered blind persons.

For more information call 081-313 4797.

There are separate regulations for Bromley's parks and open spaces. Information on these can be obtained by calling 081-313 4471.

## Transport Issues - Road

### Commuter Parking, Shortlands Station

We are still waiting for the details of the proposed ban and the consultation documentation.

### Traffic Signals, Ravensbourne Ave/Beckenham Lane

The problems at this junction were well ventilated at the recent Beckenham Place Park public Inquiry. In that context it was made clear to the Inspector that the difficulties encountered by both drivers and pedestrians were a vexed question locally. The one thing we did learn was that there is not a simple answer and more than one expert witness was called to give their opinions. Although we now have more sympathy for the traffic engineers, our stance is unaltered. Something has to be done to make it less dangerous for pedestrians to cross the road at this junction.

One thing that would make life easier for all would be if motorists stopped jumping the lights when they change to red. That problem is being taken up via our membership of the Police Consultative Committee. Cameras and a few prosecutions would probably work wonders.

### Speed Controls, Ashgrove/Calmont Rds

Despite the success of the rearranged junction at Farnaby/Warren/Bromley Ave, there is still a speed problem with traffic. Particularly at the Ashgrove/Calmont end. Following further representation to Lewisham and the local police, we were pleased to see that speed traps have been mounted by the police and quite a few vehicles were booked. Lewisham also set up traffic monitors - two cables across the road - these are normally used on a vehicle count basis, but they also record speed.



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### Nynex

During the year, Sirti the contractors for Nynex caused more than their fair share of disruption. Mainly it was bad reinstatement of the footway, but at one time or another they also severed most other services. Their roadworks practices were also variable and sometimes bore little relationship to the recognised manuals. Thank goodness it is now over for us at least. However if you know of reinstatement problems, do not let them go by default as the contractor is responsible for up to two years. Do let Robin Day in the Borough Engineers department know of any problems. His telephone number is 081-313 4792.

### Transport Issues - Rail

#### Channel Tunnel Rail Link

During the year the government announced the route for the new high speed link. The latest proposal crosses the Thames near Northfleet and gets to Kings Cross via Stratford. There will also be a spur near Longfield to allow trains to gain access to Waterloo International by using the existing main line.

Initially completion of the link was scheduled for the year 2000, but this has recently been deferred on cost grounds. That means we shall "enjoy" channel tunnel traffic over existing tracks for longer than expected.

Current plans are for all international passenger trains and about half of the freight trains to pass through Bromley and Shortlands. The passenger trains will then be routed onto the main line and the freight onto the Catford Loop line.

Bromley are having on-going discussions with BR to share the cost of sound barriers to ameliorate the effect of this extra traffic. Again money is a constraint, as well as debates about likely noise levels. At present proposals for sound barriers stop at Shortlands. However we are arguing a case for an extension to include the embanked section between Shortlands and Ravensbourne.

## Planning Issues

Once again it was supposed to be a quiet year - wrong. Who would be a forecaster !

### Oaklands Court, Oaklands Rd

This site has been vacant for years, ever since planning permission was given for a block of 16 flats. Since then there have been several applications to increase the density of development on the site. We objected to these and all were refused. However the last one went to appeal and the DoE Inspector has allowed development to be increased to 18 flats. There is still no site activity.

### The Coppice, 42 Highland Rd

Planning approval for 5 town houses has existed for this site since 1989. However no development took place. The site has now been sold at auction, so we can expect something to happen. Either the start of building or a further planning application.

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### 29a/31 Oaklands Rd

Planning applications for this site go back to 1986. All were for blocks of flats, but none were approved until 1991 when a block of 14 flats was approved. However in 1992 a different developer acquired the site and gained approval for 9 town houses. These are now almost ready for occupation. They are set well back from the road and do not have the bulk or height of most blocks of flats.

### 43/49 Farnaby Rd

For many years this group of properties have been sub-let as flats. In 1991 the owner sought permission to demolish and rebuild as 2 blocks of 10 flats each. The application was refused and went to appeal, where the refusal was upheld. Recently the houses came onto the market at auction. The new owner is degutting and refurbishing the property. We hope they do not run out of money before work is completed and they are reoccupied, or we may find fresh planning applications being made.

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#### 6 Madeira Ave

An earlier planning application for a block of flats on the site of this "cottage" were rejected at appeal. Subsequently approval was obtained for 2 pairs of semi-detached houses. The owner has now put in an application for an increase to the plan size of the houses (footprint) with some detail changes to the elevation. They also want to be allowed only 2 instead of 3 car parking spaces for the 2 larger semis. This one is so recent that our response is still being formulated.

#### 24 Oaklands Rd

An application has been made to convert the existing bungalow to a 2 storey, 5 bedrooomed house. The plot is generous and the proposal would be in keeping with the area, so we have not objected.

#### Christ Church, Highland Rd

This has been a well ventilated subject arousing strong local feeling, both for and against the proposals. After 3 planning applications for a flank extension, all of which were refused, the last 2 went to appeal. The appeal was a Local Inquiry lasting 2 days and was held in the Bromley Council Chambers last October. Inevitably when emotions become involved motives are in danger

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of being misrepresented and this was evident at the Inquiry.

However Inspectors decide appeals on planning issues.

At the appeal the Church and Bromley were represented by Counsel and we represented ourselves. Because of the documentation we had submitted the Inspector treated us as a main party. One of the items of evidence before the Inspector which attracted considerable interest was a model of the Church and the 2 appeal applications. Because it was to scale it helped clarify the planning arguments. As you might expect appearing at an Inquiry and giving evidence costs money, but thanks to the fund raising in the roads near the Church our direct expenses were covered.

The Inquiry decision is expected at any time. Whatever the result we hope that once known, it will be accepted by all concerned and any local discord that might have been generated can be put behind us.

### Billingsford, Elstree Hill

A recent application has been made to build 4 houses on the site of one house. We have objected as although the site might take two smaller houses, 4 is pushing it. The proposal also appears to involve the loss directly and indirectly of several trees all of which are protected by a tree preservation order.

### Beckenham Place Park

Much has been written about this over the last 2 years, so on the basis that readers will be familiar with the essence of the case this note will be short. In their efforts to raise cash, Lewisham decided to market the park. That resulted in planning applications to build a Tennis/Fitness centre and car park covering 10-13 acres, a Golf Driving range covering a similar acreage and increasing the golf activity to take a further 36 acres. Following a public outcry, the DoE "called in" the applications and ordered a Public Inquiry.

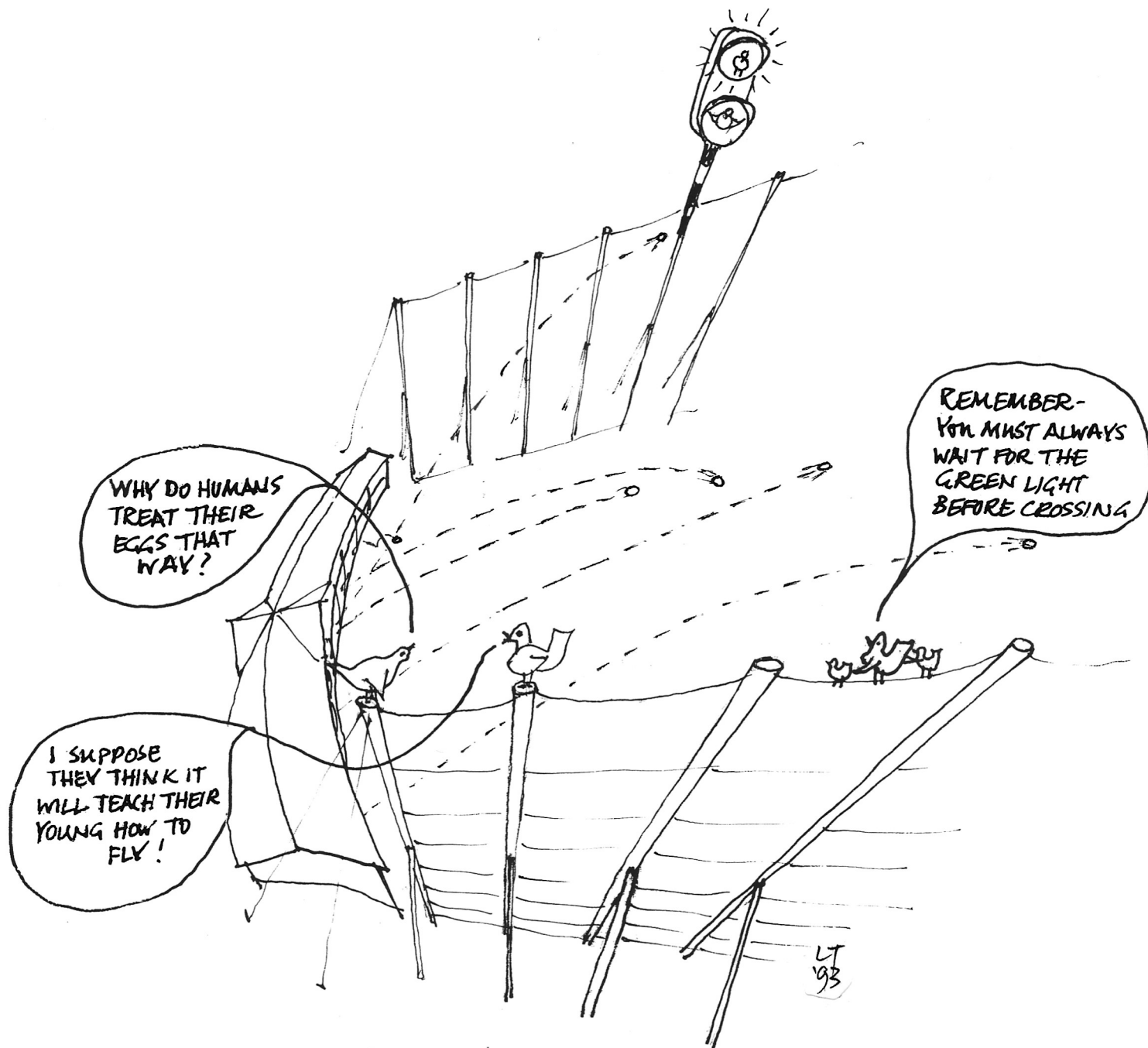
The Inquiry was chaired by a senior DoE Inspector, was held in Lewisham Town Hall and sat for 10 very full days. It finally ended in October.

There were 4 main parties, the Applicant (David Lloyd plc) with Lewisham on one side and Bromley plus ourselves representing all Bromley residents associations on the other side.

Apart from focusing on strict planning matters, the Inquiry also heard evidence from the applicant on the need for the development. When all the fine words were stripped away, what they were saying was - because there isn't one nearby then there is a need for one in Beckenham Place Park.

On a different tack Lewisham made much of the need to fund work to the Mansion House to meet their statutory maintenance responsibility. As many may know, Paul Sharrock our previous Chairman is a conservation architect and we were able to use him as an expert witness to diminish Lewisham's case.

Apart from ourselves there were many other groups and individual members of the public who wanted their say and were given the opportunity to do so. Perhaps most notable were the London Wildlife Trust and the Save Beckenham Place Park Campaign. The latter producing a petition of over 30,000 signatures against the proposals.



During the BECKENHAM PLACE PARK INQUIRY Lewisham admitted that the DRIVING RANGE would have an impact on wildlife - perhaps this is what they had in mind !

As you might expect, producing all the evidence and documentation to make our case at the Inquiry was not only time consuming but also costly. Fortunately we were helped by two substantial contributions from the Shortlands RA and the London Borough of Bromley Residents Federation, plus a great number of smaller donations from individuals. Many of whom did not live in our area but were affected by and opposed to the proposals. All told, the spontaneous financial support we received just about met our direct costs. We certainly tried our best and hope we did not let anyone down.

The Inspector is now producing his report, which in this case will be a recommendation to the Secretary of State. From advice we have had, there is nothing more we can do at this stage to influence the outcome. Depending on the result, the next action stage is when the Secretary of State announces his decision. We are still having discussions and taking advice on what would be the most effective action if the decision favours the proposed developments. We are therefore starting to build a "reaction matrix" to the various combinations that might occur. That way when the decisions are known, time is not wasted debating what to do.

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### The New Borough Unitary Development Plans

#### Bromley

The Bromley plan is well advanced and is now nearing its final stages. The most useful aspects of our involvement and appearance at the Local Inquiry, have been in achieving a degree of protection for the eastern skyline and increased protection for the land abutting Shortlands golf course and the sports grounds in the valley bottom.

#### Lewisham

Lewisham's plan is due to go before a Local Inquiry which starts on 18th January 1994. It is scheduled to last 11 weeks.

We rather surprised ourselves by not finding any objections which we wished to pursue to the Inquiry stage. Indeed we have written supporting 15 of the Policies in the plan.

## OUTLINE VIEW OF THE SOCIETY - HOW IT IS ORGANISED AND WHAT IT SETS OUT TO DO.

- **The Society was formed in 1987** - initially to object to the proposal to develop the "Cedarhurst" site in Elstree Hill although, from the outset, it was the Society's intention to also resist other unsuitable proposals that might be made within its area. Since that time the Society has gained a reputation as being an effective restraint on inappropriate development within this area.
- **The Society's Constitution** sets out its main aims as "to preserve the best and improve the rest of the environment" - in this part of the Ravensbourne Valley. - To this end:-
  - \* we monitor Planning issues and respond as we consider appropriate.
  - \* initiate action that would lead to local environmental improvements.
- **Membership** is open to all residents living within our area, which is bounded by:-
  - \* to the **West-Downs Hill & Ravensbourne Ave.**
  - \* to the **East-Highland, Oaklands & Coniston Rds.**
  - \* to the **North-Ashgrove Rd. & Crab Hill**
  - \* to the **South-Beckenham Lane.**
- **The annual subscription** is collected between July and September for the following year and covers all members of each household. From 1987 up to the present time the subscription has been held at £5.00.
- **The Annual General Meeting** is usually held each March - when Officers are elected.
- **Regular Meetings** (at which all members are welcome) are held every other month - usually on the first Thursday of the month at the Bromley Court Hotel. Current topics are discussed and actions agreed at these meetings.
- **Working Party Meetings** take place as required by the issue in hand and are attended by those officers and Members who have been delegated to act.
- Each Street within the Society's area has a "Road Representative" who collects Subscriptions and distributes Newsletters - These newsletters are issued at least four times each year but usually there are more. At least one of these is delivered, not only to Members, but to all households in the area.
- The more members we have the stronger and more effective we shall be - **if you are not yet a member, we hope you will remedy that today by completing the form below !**

Dear Resident

The Committee of this Society hope that you have found our Newsletter of interest and that it will have given you some idea of the work we have been doing over the last few years to protect this area from unsuitable developments and to suggest ways that the Local Councils might improve our environment.

**If you accept the value of our work, which we believe benefits all local residents - please join now.**

The annual subscription is only £5.00 per annum per household. Senior Citizens may pay what they feel they can afford up to the five pounds. Each subscription year runs from 1st.July.

To join, all you have to do is to fill in the slip below and send or take it to your Road Representative at the address given, with your subscription. The full amount would be welcomed but, as half our year has passed, new members will be accepted on payment of £2.50 to cover them up to the end of June 1994.

For the name and address  
of your Road Representative  
see the previous page; (page 11)

**Please enter your name and address here**

..... (Senior Citizen yes/no)  
..... (Delete inapplicable)

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A receipt will be sent to you.

**Subscription amount enclosed : £.....**