



NEWSLETTER

5/94

December 1994



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
TO YOU ALL

AND VERY BEST WISHES FOR 1995

EDITORIAL

It has been our custom for several years to distribute the Christmas Newsletter to every household in the area and not only to those who are registered supporters. It is worth reiterating that the Society is non-political and it's prime objective is to "Preserve the best and improve the rest". Everyone involved is an unpaid volunteer.

The Society is a descendant of an earlier Houseowners Association which went back to the 1930s, but was disbanded in the 1950s. By the 1980s during the spate of building redevelopment the Association was reconstituted as a Residents Association with its present title. Originally much time was taken up fighting planning applications which proposed demolishing houses and building flats. However over the last few years the brief has widened to include issues relating to; the effects of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link; Open spaces and woodlands; Roads and junctions; and the functions/effects of the Health Authority and the new NHS Hospital Trusts.

If you do not yet support us and would like to or would like to tell us which range of issues you think we should be involved in, why not complete the enclosed membership slip and pop it through the letter box of your Road Representative.

Compared to the frenetic activity of the previous 12 months, leading up to the 11 day Public Inquiry on Beckenham Place Park at which we played a major part and were treated as a main party alongside David Lloyd, Lewisham and Bromley, the last year has been comparatively quiet. Yet looking back we have become involved in and contributed to an ever widening range of issues. These are covered in more detail on the following pages. However at this point it is appropriate to say that if the Society is to be effective in this wider range of activity, your Chairman and Secretary will from time to time need specialist help.

Unfortunately the time scales of questionnaires or invitations to consultation meetings rarely allow enough time for a Newsletter asking for informed advice. Consequently we would like to compile a list of people they can turn to for guidance - any volunteers? This Newsletter indicates some of the subjects they have become involved in so far. Doubtless 1995 will introduce additional ones. Once again - any volunteers ?

Talking about 1995, many will recall that it is the 50th anniversary of victory in Europe and the Far East (VE & VJ days). If anyone has wartime recollections, at home or abroad, I will be happy to print them in future Newsletters. The recollections can be about anything relating to the last World War. Do not overlook the fact that many events which were seen as everyday at the time may not be fully appreciated or even imaginable by a younger generation. Environment Bromley (EnBro) are seeking similar information with the aim of producing a printed record. If the contributor agrees recollections will also be forwarded to EnBro. Something about 2-300 words long would be ideal but all contributions will be welcome.

Finally thanks to everyone who has supported the Society, both actively and passively, over the past year.

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 5th January. Members Meeting 8.0pm Shakespeare 4
Bromley Court Hotel

Thursday 2nd March. Annual General Meeting 8.0pm Wellington room
Bromley Court hotel

(All are welcome, but only members may vote)

Peter Pain (Editor)

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REPRESENTATIVES

We are extremely sorry to report that Iris Legg our Road Rep for 1-108 Farnaby Rd has had to give up due to ill health. Our sincere appreciation for all the loyal work that Iris has done. Audrey Burford has volunteered to take on Iris's responsibilities.

Peter Pain has stood down as Road Rep for Madeira Ave but continues as Chairman and Editor. Ray Territt has volunteered to take over and has already cut his teeth collecting subscriptions.

Mr Hayden Jones has volunteered to be the representative for Downs Hill Conservation Area on the Bromley Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas.

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PLANNING

Unitary Development Plans

Bromley After a year of public consultation. followed by a Public Inquiry - to which we contributed - followed by more consultation, Bromley's new Development Plan has now been approved by the Secretary of State, printed and published. Copies are available from the Council Offices at £10 each. Alternatively it is available for inspection at public libraries and the Council Planning Office.

Lewisham This plan is not as far advanced as Bromley's. The initial public consultation and the Public Inquiry have been completed, although the Inspectors report is not yet available. When it is, more consultation will follow and possibly amendment before it is submitted for final approval to the Secretary of State.

Applications

40 Madeira Avenue There have been two applications. The first was for a pair of detached houses, the second was for a pair of semi-detached. Both were rejected on grounds of overdevelopment. We objected to the first proposal but not the second.

The Coppice & Purple Haze Highland Rd Planning approval exists for 5 town houses on the site of the Coppice. A recent application has been made for outline permission to build 9 town houses on the site of both properties. The application was returned to the applicant because it was seriously lacking in accuracy and detail. Doubtless it will be resubmitted in 1995.

Christ Church Highland Rd-Flank Extension. This is no longer a planning issue from the Society's point of view, as the Church was given approval for the smaller of 3 schemes at a Local Inquiry. However, Diocesan approval (Faculty) has not yet been obtained. This approval is given by a Consistory Court. We have offered the Court, and they have accepted, the scale model of the development that we made for the Inquiry. Although it was expected that the Court would have sat by now, it has not done so. We also understand that the Diocesan Advisory Committee who consider such applications and recommend to the Court, has not yet sat either. Our goodwill offer remains open.

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Beckenham Place Park Following the Public Inquiry referred to earlier, the Inspector's Report and the Secretary of State's decision became available earlier this year. All of the development proposals except for minor works to the Mansion House, a Grade II* listed building, were refused.

As a consequence Lewisham initiated a local consultation exercise. This resulted in the setting up of a joint Council/Public Working Party to consider the future of the Park. We together with other interested representative bodies have a seat on that Working Party. So far it has met twice and will meet again early in December. The initial meeting was really a public meeting to agree a way forward. The second meeting agreed Terms of Reference and a Constitution. The next meeting will start work on a draft Management Plan for the Park. In reality although it is called a working party, it would be better described as a Consultative Committee, not dissimilar to those for conservation areas. It cannot hold executive powers because it does not control the budget. That function is vested in Lewisham's Leisure Services Committee. Nevertheless if the experience of a similar arrangement for Blackheath is anything to go by, it should not be a paper tiger,

One of the more active objectors to the development proposals for the Park was the Save Beckenham Place Park Campaign Group. They are still active and recently held their AGM where they agreed a constitution which underlined their continuing commitment to the Park. There was also some discussion about reconstituting themselves as Friends of the Park, but no decision was reached. However, it seems to the Officers of your Society that the Campaign Group is ideally positioned to assume this new role now that the immediate threat of development has receded. Not only are they a single focus group ie the Park, but they also have a wide geographical spread of members. If they were to take the step and reform themselves as Friends of the Park they could be a powerful voice for the good of the Park.

Information Paper for RA's on Planning Appeals/Inquiries

Following our involvement in some 16 Appeals of which 11 become Inquiries, culminating in the lengthy Inquiry on Beckenham Place Park, your Chairman and Secretary were asked to record the

Society's experience for the benefit of the Bromley Federation of Residents Associations. So far most of the affiliated groups have asked for a copy which we have provided at cost. The paper was based on a distillation of the Society's accrued expertise. However, it does not claim to be definitive. If any member has expertise in this field and would like see a copy and offer comments/corrections for incorporation in issue 2, please contact either the Chairman or Secretary.

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TRANSPORT

Channel Tunnel Rail Link Everyone will be aware that the Tunnel is now open. Freight traffic has been running for some time and after months of trials, passenger services have just started. Most will also be aware that until a dedicated Rail Link is built, the bulk of the traffic will travel through Bromley and Shortlands. Even after a dedicated link, freight traffic will continue to use that route. So far experience indicates that the most serious noise factor is the heavy freight traffic at night. This accords with the forecasts by the Acoustic Consultant retained by Bromley. Joint BR/Bromley discussions have agreed a number of areas which justify the erection of sound barriers to reduce this noise. At present the section between Shortlands and Ravensbourne stations is not included. Following persistent lobbying, a technical submission to and a meeting with Bromley's Acoustics Consultant, the situation is being reviewed. Meantime the recording points are now reading actual noise rather than being the basis for estimated noise levels. Bromley's Technical Services are sympathetic to our problems and if the threshold noise level of 66dBA is realised we have an assurance that Bromley will fund their half of the cost. What has not yet been achieved is the acceptance by RailTrack that there is a problem.

Ravensbourne Avenue/Beckenham Lane Junction Our attempts to get an improved traffic light sequence and to ensure a safe crossing period for pedestrians continues. We are still in correspondence with officers of the Chief Engineers Dept and have enlisted the support of our 2 new Councillors. This promises to be a long running saga, not least because it is a 5 way junction controlled

by 2 sets of lights. As we learnt at the Beckenham Place Park Inquiry, the engineers scope for readjustment of the sequence or realignment of the road is limited. We have suggested a possible realignment which would allow for a pedestrian refuge, but cries of "Eureka" were sadly lacking. We have recently learned that several options are being considered and we have asked for detailed information so that we can input local opinion.

Crab Hill - Ravensbourne Station to Ravensbourne Rd

Following the change of Council boundary, we have been trying to sort out with Bromley and our Councillors, exactly who is responsible for this section. In particular the footpath and the clearance of overhanging growth. So far no one appears to know the answer. Bromley have asked Lewisham and Lewisham cannot find any records relating to ownership.

Parking/Rat-runs We attended several meetings with our previous two Councillors plus officers from the Chief Engineers Dept, to discuss rat-runs in the area and non-resident parking. This affects parts of Farnaby, Highland, Madeira, Bracken Hill, Park End and Blythe Rd. Some of the ideas discussed have already been implemented. There are more yellow lines in Park End, Highland and Bracken Hill. There have also been changes to the junction layout at Blythe Rd/Beckenham Lane and Highland Rd/Madeira Ave. Doubtless not everyone will agree with what has been done, but it fits in with Bromley's fairly new policy of making junctions slower and giving pedestrians a fighting chance by not only slowing speeds but also narrowing the carriageway.

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MEETING WITH OUR NEW COUNCILLORS

Following the Spring elections when Martin's Hill & Town elected 2 new Councillors, we arranged to meet them, to introduce ourselves and to discuss issues that concerned the Society as well as the issues that they felt strongly about. Matters discussed were: - Pedestrian problems at the Shortlands junction complex.

- The effects of Channel Tunnel rail traffic

Issues which concerned them were:

- Crime in the community; Traffic problems; Education.

HEALTH

This has been a totally new subject for us. Both the Health Authority and the Bromley NHS Trust appear to be suddenly very keen to know the views of local people and organisations.

To date we have :

- Attended a meeting, with other RAs, with the Chief Executive and Chairman of the Health Authority.
- Responded to a questionnaire commissioned By Bromley Health to appraise the existing services in accident and emergency centres and general practice surgeries. With comments on alternative arrangements such as a minor injury unit at Beckenham and/or Orpington.
- We also attended a meeting together with other RAs, with the Chief Executive of the Bromley NHS Hospital Trust.

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CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY

Apart from our regular attendance at the local Police Consultative Committee, we have also responded to a report on "Crime in the Community" from the Police/Bromley Community Safety Panel.

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OPEN SPACES & WOODLAND

We have been consulted and contributed to the following studies initiated by Bromley:

- An Indicative Forestry and Woodland Strategy for the Borough.
- The Bromley Hedgerow Report.
- The Future of Parks and Open Spaces in Bromley.

To some extent we were handicapped by the continuing lack of a Tree Warden. If anyone is interested in trees and countryside matters and is prepared to give up a Saturday morning 6 times a year to attend the training and information sessions run by Bromley at High Elms, or would like to know more, please contact the Chairman or Secretary.

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