



# **NEWSLETTER**

## **2/95**

**April 1995**

### **EDITORIAL:**

It is now nearly a month since the AGM and it is timely to review the proceedings in a Newsletter.

Once again we were able to hold the AGM in the comfort of the Wellington Rooms at the Bromley Court Hotel. The staunch supporters who braved the indifferent weather and the even worse forecast of snow later were well rewarded. As advertised our guest speaker was Richard Mangan, Director of the Mander Mitchensen Theatre Collection Trust which is housed in the Mansion House in Beckenham Place Park. As anticipated he was an extremely good speaker and raised many chuckles with his anecdotes about life in the theatre. Seamlessly he led into the origins, the work and the present problems of the Trust. The latter, of course, are inextricably linked with the future of the Mansion House and that is something in which the Society has a role as a member of the Joint Working Party on the way forward for the Park and its associated buildings. In that respect it is important that your representatives on the Working Party have a clear idea of the views of the membership, but more on that later.

We were also very pleased to welcome our two Councillors from Bromley, Peter Ayres and Ray Warner and one of our Councillors from Lewisham, Julian Hawkins. They all made themselves available for questions and discussion during the break for refreshments.

**Subscriptions:** Once again it was agreed that subscriptions should be held at £5 per household. It was also agreed that Senior Citizens should have the option to vary their payment, between 5p to £5, if they so wished. In addition it was proposed and

agreed that the same facility should be available to households where the "breadwinner" was out of work. It is now the 9th year running that subscriptions have been kept stable. In view of the increased activity of the Society and the wider range of subjects we have become involved in this really must represent good value for money.

**Election of Officers:** Peter Pain, Leslie Tucker, Brian Sanders and Wally Carlross were each re-elected as Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Auditor respectively.

**Representatives:** Carol Davidson, one of our founder members in Elstree Hill, has had to stand down as Road Rep. due to other commitments. We are fortunate that Daphne Robeson has volunteered to take over as Road Rep. for Elstree Hill and Hillbrow. Many thanks to Carol and welcome to Daphne.

Iris Legg's husband, Roger, has written a most appreciative letter to thank us for our letter of condolence and the contribution we made to St. Christopher's Hospice in memory of Iris. All-told similar contributions from various sources came to about £2,000. Clearly Iris was held in high regard by many other individuals and groups as well as ourselves.

**Changes to the Constitution:** Members will recall that last year at the suggestion of the outgoing Treasurer we changed from commercial accounting to cash accounting. Several other proposals were made at that time which required deeper study. A small Working Party of Chairman, Secretary and the new Treasurer was set up. They co-opted various members with accounting, business and legal skills as well as consulting the Civic Trust, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and literature on the impact of the recent revisions to Charity / Trust law. The net result was a six page report by the Working Party with recommendations for amendments to the Society's constitution. That report was formally considered at the AGM and all the recommendations were accepted. The revised constitution is included as a centrefold to this Newsletter. Road Reps. will be given additional copies so that new members can have a copy of the current constitution at the time they join.

**Conclusion:** Judging from the many comments made, it was considered to be a most enjoyable and worthwhile AGM. Perhaps it was also helped by the choice of background music before, between and after the 2 sessions ? Our thanks to Paul Bennett for this.

**Dates for the Diary:** The next 2 Members' Meetings will be held at 8.00 pm in the Shakespeare 4 room at the Bromley Court Hotel on : **Thursday 4th May and Thursday 6th July**

Please make a note of these dates and come along. Your Officers are not omniscient and need to know your interests and concerns.

***Peter Pain (Editor)***

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## **PLANNING ISSUES:**

**Beckenham Place Park:** Reference was made in the Editorial to the Joint Working Party on the Park. That Working Party has spawned a sub-Committee which is writing a management plan for the Park. The plan will not only deal with the present but also set guide-lines for the future. The Society is represented on both the Working Party and the sub-Committee. It is important that we have an understanding of what our members expect from the Park now, what changes they would like to see and how they would like to see it evolve over a period of say, 5 years plus. We are very much aware that the Park is many things to many people and not all activities are perfectly compatible. It is a case of working towards a balance that best meets the needs of most users. Perhaps an impossible task. Nevertheless it is important that we know what the membership expects. To illustrate the point, the pavilion near Ravensbourne Station was vandalised and because it was in a dangerous state, has been demolished. The insurance was for repair / rebuilding costs, but the questions of where, how and for what purpose have to be answered.

The subject will be ventilated again at the next Members' Meeting on the 4th May. See **Dates for the Diary** for time and venue.

**Brabourne Cottage, Oakland Road:** Some 5 years ago planning permission was granted for the demolition of this locally listed building and the erection of 4 terraced town houses. Recently a fresh application was submitted for the renewal of that permission. Once again English Heritage were consulted, this time by the Council. English Heritage expressed the view that if the Council's Local List and the Unitary Development Plan Policy E6 (which requires that any replacement to a locally listed building should be of exceptionally high standard) were to have any credibility, the application should be refused. In due course that decision was taken. Councillor Warner spoke cogently and succinctly for that decision at both of the Planning Meetings which considered the application.

**Christ Church, Highland Road:** The Church now has a judgement that faculty has been approved. It is conditional on them raising the money and that the Diocesan Advisory Committee vet progress at various stages i.e. working drawings etc. The faculty lasts for 3 years but is extendable. The Church intends to get pledges for the money before going ahead with working drawings and letting contracts.

**Midland Bank Playing Fields, Calmont Road:** Not long after they amalgamated with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank the Midland Bank put in an application to Lewisham for outline permission to build houses on part of their sports field, the remainder to become a training ground for Millwall FC.

The area concerned is designated Metropolitan Open Land (in planning terms this is equivalent to urban green belt) and abuts the Green Chain Walk. It also abuts the boundary with Bromley. Bromley were formally consulted as an adjoining Authority and formally opposed the proposal, as do the Lewisham Planning Officers concerned. Lewisham Planning Committee will be considering the application on Thursday the 6th April 1995 in the Civic Suite at 7.15 pm. We have already written objecting on the grounds that the proposal is contrary to Lewisham's policies in their UDP and referring to the Secretary of State's decision on Beckenham Place Park. Since then the DoE Senior Inspector who presided at the Inquiry on Lewisham's UDP has reported, he not only supported Lewisham's policies on retaining open space but he specifically recommended strengthening them to further safeguard the remaining open spaces. As allowed by Lewisham (but not by Bromley) we took the opportunity to speak for

5 minutes on our objections at the Planning Committee meeting. The Committee unanimously refused the application. We now wait to see whether an appeal will be lodged.

### **ROAD ISSUES:**

**Downs Hill:** This Road saw some excitement recently when many residents received letters from the Bromley Engineers' Department detailing plans for up to 4 new style island refuges in the middle of the Road as a traffic calming measure. The great majority of the residents written to, objected to the proposals on the grounds that except for the one at the junction with Foxgrove, there was no need. In view of the large response against the scheme only the island refuge at the junction with Foxgrove was built. There must be a message here !

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### **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

**Plant a Tree Scheme:** Bromley have launched a scheme of a "Tree as a living gift". They will plant a tree for you or you can do it yourself at some 100 sites. They include 7 woodland sites such as High Elms and Scadbury Park, over 70 local parks and most of the Council school grounds. Costs range from £2 for a woodland sapling to £75 for a large parkland tree. There are several variations between these figures including options for groups of trees or groves.

If anyone is interested and wants to know more, leaflets are available in local libraries and leisure centres or you can call "Plant a Tree" line on 0181 313 4470.

**Bromley Environment Week, 19-29 May:** This is part of a national event and the Bromley Environment Promotions' Team are keen to get as many individuals and groups involved as possible. They are offering the loan of litter pickers, supplies of sacks, disposable gloves and skips can also be arranged. Apart from major organised clean-ups, they suggest that activities can range from an individual picking up odd items of litter to talking to local shops where litter is a problem to see what is needed and can be done, to helping owners of untidy sites to clean it up. Bromley also wants to know if any of their land needs attention. Further information from:

**Pat Ellender on 0181 313 4510**

### 50 Years Ago - Recollections:

In the Christmas Newsletter, members were asked for any war-time recollections - civilian or military. The first is from Mr Taylor in Oaklands Road, the second has been culled from the obituary to Iris Legg in the Tenby Observer.

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"While serving with the South Wales Borderers during the war, I became friendly with the nephew of Solomon, the world famous pianist. He had been a photographer in Hollywood but when hostilities broke out in September 1939 he had returned to England and enlisted. He was given the job of post corporal in the battalion and seemed destined for a very cushy army career. Suddenly, telling no one he volunteered for the RAF and was accepted for flying duties. I never saw him again.

Towards the end of the war Solomon came to French Indo-China (Viet-Nam) to entertain the troops. I stood beside him in the hall where he was to perform and wondered if I dare enquire about my erstwhile friend. Outside French troops and Annamite guerillas engaged in sporadic shooting and Solomon seemed rather jittery ... thus the opportunity passed.

Years later a Fleet Street colleague mentioned that his wife was in a maternity hospital and the next bed to her was taken by a niece of Solomon. I asked him to try to find out what had happened to my post corporal friend. He was told that after becoming a Squadron Leader, DFC, he had been killed in a night raid over Germany.

I have been to the RAF church in London several times and looked at the Book of Remembrance that contains his name ..... and reflected on the futility of war .....

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"As a small child of six, Iris Legg was evacuated with her Deptford school to Pembrokeshire at the beginning of the war. It was a disturbing experience for one so young. She found a welcome in the home of David and Frances Michael in Clunderwen. Mr Michael was the Minister of the Blaenconyn Chapel, Frances and he already had a family of four, almost grown up. It was a challenge for a couple not so young and a courageous personal response of Christian humanity. Iris thus grew up in a Welsh-speaking Manse and became

a little Welsh girl, attending the local village school and later continuing at Narberth Grammar School. Iris went on to Bedford College to qualify as a teacher. Altogether she was for ten years the surrogate daughter of the Blaenconyn Manse.

Her "Pembrokeshire" family were at the funeral thanksgiving led by the Rev. and Mrs Tom Michael (Haverfordwest). At the special request of the family there was a reading in Welsh, in which Irish was fluent. Many others of the "family" were also present to pay their respects. Later at the Legg family home, in pride of place on the mantelpiece was a photograph of David and Frances Michael whom Iris loved as parents. Wars are ugly matters where humanity is jettisoned. This local story is a reminder that love can win through even the darkest times, as in that Manse over 50 years ago."

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**VE and VJ Days, Commemoration in Bromley:** Keeping to the same theme, Bromley have written to us giving advance notice that plans are underway for a series of events throughout the Borough to commemorate the 50th anniversary of victory in Europe and victory in Japan. The actual dates of VE and VJ days are 8th May and 19th August respectively.

Activities already organised are a celebration dance and dinner on 13th May (no venue mentioned), two shows at the Churchill Theatre and the lighting of beacons. There will also be a Festival in Orpington featuring a parade, fete, arena events and fireworks.

A free events leaflet is being produced and will be given wide publicity as well as being sent to every household at about the middle of April.

If any member wants to advertise their business in the leaflet, we are told that this will be free of charge, call: **0181 313 4548.**

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