

# NEWSLETTER

4/99

May 1999

## EDITORIAL

This Newsletter is a single issue edition and the subject is Meridian Markers. The reason is that Leslie Tucker has now made sufficient progress in design, costings and tenders for firm decisions to be taken.

Members may remember that back in 1996 it was agreed that the society should explore ways of making a visible and permanent physical contribution to our area, possibly to mark the Millennium. Ideas were sought and tested for suitability. It was subsequently decided that the most appropriate and practical, was to mark the point on Farnaby Road where the Greenwich Meridian (0° Longitude) crossed it. That concept also fitted in with Bromley Council's encouragement for the planting of trees on the meridian line to mark the millennium.

Leslie Tucker volunteered to examine alternative approaches and costs. He reported back at the 1998 AGM and was given the go ahead to proceed further with a budget figure of £2,000 in mind. Not all the firms approached were within budget or responded promptly and the process took longer than expected - missing the 1999 AGM. Enough progress has now been made to allow the proposals for the markers and their unveiling to be presented to the Membership as a whole and to ask for approval to proceed at the next Members' Meeting to be held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July at Bromley Court Hotel at the usual time of 8pm.

In the pages which follow Leslie gives a description of the proposals and how they have been arrived at. As you will see, comments are invited - both positive or negative (and hopefully, constructive). These will be taken into account at the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July. For return date, and addresses - read on.

**Peter Pain (Editor)**

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## MERIDIAN MARKERS

### MEMBERSHIP CONSULTATION

We have now reached the stage when you, the members, can help by giving your support to the proposals set out below. These have been considered in detail by the Sub-committee set up for the purpose, consisting of nine interested members including Elizabeth Davies our Chairman and Brian Sanders our Treasurer. The proposals have also been outlined and approved at the most recent members' meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

**If, after reading this report, members have any comments, will they please write to either our Secretary,**

Roy McCarthy,  
16, Ravensmead Road  
Bromley BR2 0BT

or to

Leslie Tucker  
5, Bromley Avenue  
Bromley BR1 4BG

**Comments to be received not later than Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June.**

This will allow the implications of any comments to be considered by the Sub-committee before the Members' Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July at Bromley Court Hotel. That meeting will be principally dedicated to this subject, it will take into account all of the comments received, and those present will be asked to give the Society clearance to proceed by agreeing to commit the recommended expenditure. Whether members have sent in comments or not it is hoped that all those interested will attend the meeting as it will be by the votes of those present that the final decisions will be made. A programme has been prepared for the period leading up to the unveiling which shows that a decision needs to be made in the near future and preferably by July.

### THE TENDERING PROCEDURE

Following comments made after the presentation at the 1998 AGM it was considered that the use of standard products, such as bollards with the addition of some appropriate lettering, would not result in a solution with the desired distinction. Designs for special markers have therefore been prepared for pricing - cast iron and stainless steel have been considered as alternative materials - either one being capable of being robust and long-lasting.

Competitive prices for four alternative designs of marker, have been obtained from six manufacturers of special street furniture or metalwork. Three of the designs priced were for manufacture in stainless steel and the other was designed to be made of cast iron. All of the prices received for the cast iron option exceeded the budget by significant sums and that approach was discarded at the end of the first round. All except one of the quotations for the first stainless steel design (which was tabled and discussed at a regular members' meeting last year) were also significantly above the agreed budget. The one exception was from a firm whose financial standing was found to be shaky. At this stage it was decided to obtain further prices whilst giving the lowest tender the opportunity to satisfy our doubts. Three new firms were recommended to us as appropriate by a well-known local firm of contractors whose Managing Director was a member of this Society. Three of the prices received as a result of this round of enquiries have been seriously considered by the Sub-committee and the following proposal is being recommended.

## THE PROPOSALS

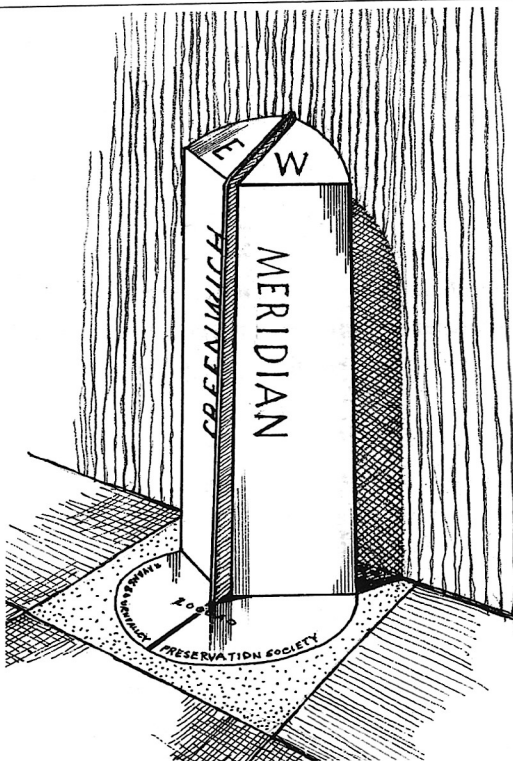
In an attempt to bring the cost within our budget two changes of approach were made; one involved a minor modification to the design of the upstand marker which simplified manufacture. The other change was to consider having one upstanding marker on one side of the road and one flat circular plate flush with the pavement on the other. This was instead of having two upstanding markers, one on each side of the road. In addition one firm, who happened to make a standard product which might be adapted to form a suitable special, was asked to price that option. Although it resulted in a price below our budget the design was not satisfactory - neither was the performance of the firm found to be very efficient in providing the figure.

The perspective view on the next page shows the current preferred design. A technical drawing of it appears on page 5. This is the upstand marker intended for the south side of Farnaby Road. The flat plate for the other side of the road is illustrated on page 6. The vertical marker and the circular plate at its foot is to be made of stainless steel finished to a fine satin polish. The lettering is to be engraved into the steel surface and coloured black. The design is intended to resist vandalism and to require virtually no maintenance. The upstand marker will be visible from passing cars and buses and the flat plate at its foot and the one on the

other pavement will give children of all ages the pleasure of standing with one foot in either hemisphere without having to go to Greenwich.

## PRICES AND PERFORMANCE

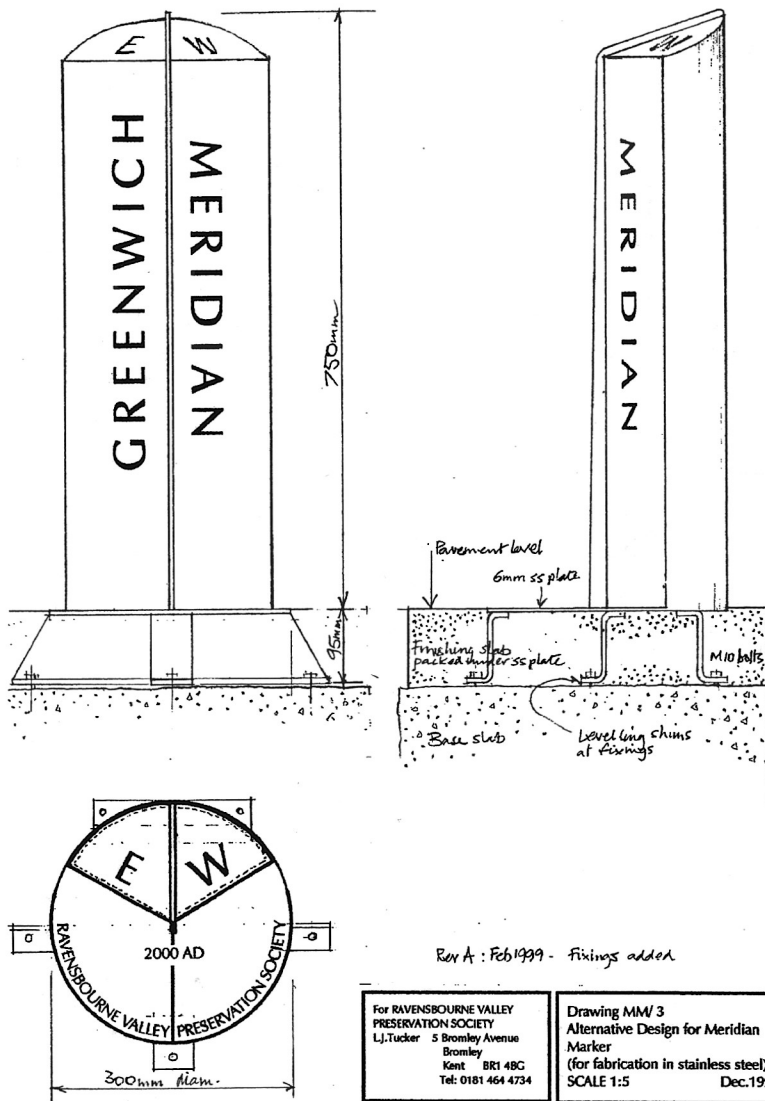
We now have two prices for this solution; one below our budget and one a little above. The problem is that the lower price of £1,592 seems excessively lower than any other, has been submitted by the firm which has had the poor financial report and, perhaps more importantly, they have failed to demonstrate that they are on top of the job - no questions and no suggestions usually mean no idea of the problems. It is important that we are not let down by skimping, by delays or claims for extras during manufacture because of their very low price coupled to a possible lack of understanding. This concern may be unfair, but it is real and needs to be addressed. To be able to make a fairer judgement arrangements have been made for Leslie Tucker to visit this firm and try to satisfy himself before any acceptance is considered.



The other price is from a firm which has fostered more confidence - but their price is higher. Their basic price, including delivery and VAT, is £2,138 although it is possible that a strengthening plate included in this figure could prove to be unnecessary - in which case their cost would come down to £2,021. A visit to check them out will also be made.

The results of these two visits should be available for discussion at the July meeting. In the meantime it has been recommended by the Sub-committee and accepted by the May Members' Meeting, that Leslie Tucker can make these visits knowing that, if he considers it necessary, the higher price could be recommended for acceptance. Without this prior backing the visit would be pointless. Of course,

he will not actually commit the Society, prior to the July meeting. In order to avoid any delays or problems if additional unavoidable costs emerge, the Subcommittee suggested that an additional contingency sum of 10% of the higher figure and rounded up to a total of £2,500 should be set aside. Such a contingency would not be expended unless found to be absolutely necessary and would be subject to the acceptance of the July meeting.



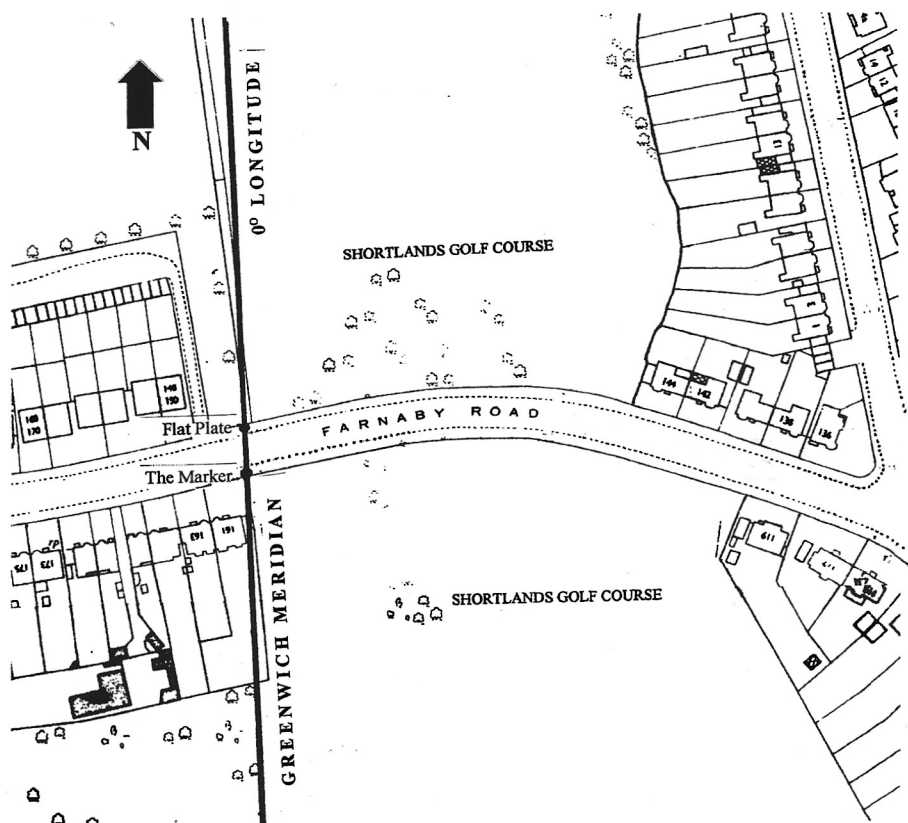
Rev A : Feb 1999 - Fixings added

For RAVENSBORNE VALLEY  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY  
L.J. Tucker 5 Bromley Avenue  
Bromley  
Kent BR1 4BG  
Tel: 0181 464 4734

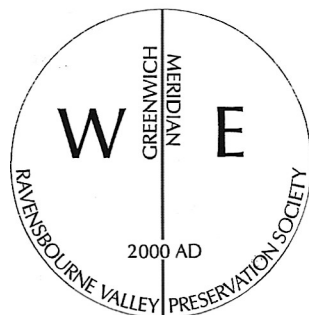
Drawing MM/3  
Alternative Design for Meridian  
Marker  
(for fabrication in stainless steel)  
SCALE 1:5 Dec. 1998

## THE LOCATION OF THE MARKERS

This was made clear at the 1998 AGM but for those who were not there the plan below shows where the meridian crosses Farnaby Road. The exact location of the line on site will be established with the help of Bromley officers.



The drawing on the right shows the lettering on the circular stainless steel plate to be set flush in the pavement on the north side of the road. The plate is 300mm in diameter (about 12 inches).



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## **FIXING THE MARKERS IN POSITION**

The costs discussed so far do not include the cost of fixing the markers in position and repairing the pavements where disturbed. The London Borough of Bromley have agreed to accept ownership of the markers, to carry out this work and to meet the costs involved. They have also agreed to maintain the markers in the future and to indemnify the RVPS and its members against any claims resulting from the presence of the markers in a public footway. A satisfactory draft legal agreement has been exchanged to this effect which will be completed as soon as all the details of the final design have been established. Not only has Bromley agreed to work with us on this but they have been most supportive and encouraging throughout.

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNVEILING THE MARKERS**

As reported in the Newsletter in January and referred to earlier, our Millennium Sub-committee is also considering what form any “event” constructed round the unveiling should take and when it should happen. The thoughts of that group, as outlined in the January Newsletter, have not changed but some progress has been made since that time. We now know that the Shortlands Golf Club could accommodate up to 100 people for a simple reception after an unveiling ceremony. We have also invited the mayor to carry out the unveiling on a Sunday early in April 2000. It will, of course, involve next year’s mayor and the arrangements cannot be confirmed until after he, or she, has been appointed during the next few weeks and has had the opportunity to sort out what promises to be an exceptionally busy schedule for the millennium year.

There are still a lot of details to decide about the reception. At present, as numbers are limited by the venue, it has been suggested that, when the time comes, members will be invited to apply for tickets which will be issued on a “first come, first served” basis. There has also been a debate as to whether the tickets would be free of charge or not. The opinion of the Sub-committee and of the members attending the May Meeting was that they should be free of charge and include an initial drink plus “nibbles”. The club bar will be available for those requiring further drinks to buy their own. Costs involved have not yet been established but if the above suggestion is followed they may be in the order of £300 to £400. Agreement to this approach will be sought at the July meeting.

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The Society intends to invite a limited number of guests to the unveiling and reception in addition to the mayor. These are likely to include our Ward Councillors, those officers of the Council who have been principally involved with the project and a few others who have supported our Society in the past.

We would not forget to also invite the Press.

## **TO SUM UP**

- ☐ The principle of providing these markers has already been established.
- ☐ We ask for the agreement of members to the foregoing proposals, including the possible acceptance of a tender which is not the lowest received and above the original budget.
- ☐ We also ask for agreement to the outline proposals set out for the unveiling and reception and to the reasonable costs of these arrangements to the Society.
- ☐ Comments to be received by 21<sup>st</sup> June.
- ☐ Comments will be evaluated by the Sub-committee prior to the July meeting and debated at the meeting. Members present at the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July will decide what action shall follow in this matter.

If you are able to come to the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July it is suggested that it would be helpful if you bring your copy of this Newsletter with you for reference.

**Leslie Tucker**