



NEWSLETTER

5/2000

December 2000

WISHING ALL
OUR
READERS
A VERY HAPPY
CHRISTMAS
AND
A PEACEFUL
NEW YEAR



EDITORIAL

Every year about now we distribute our bi-monthly Newsletter to every household in the area and not only to those who support us financially. The intention is to get it through everyone's letterbox before Christmas, so our very Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all of our readers. This is also a good time to say thank you to everyone who has supported the Society -actively and passively- during the past year.

Although the name of the Society sounds wide-ranging and general, we are in fact a Residents' Association covering an area broadly bounded by London Rd, Beckenham Lane, Downs Hill/Crab Hill and what used to be the Garden Gate public house. We aim to be a pressure group on issues which do or could affect us locally. So we deal with the Councillors and Officers of both Bromley and Lewisham.

As before this Newsletter attempts to review our activities over the past year and perhaps add a little perspective to what has happened or is about to happen. Issues we have specifically addressed during the year cover :

- * Planning applications and sometimes Appeals.
- * Beckenham Place Park, current and future management.
- * Roads and transport, including Railtrack's proposals for Shortlands junction.
- * Marking the Millennium with a post and plaque on the Greenwich Meridian.
- * Tree Preservation Orders.
- * Environmental issues.
- * Policing and crime.

The Society is non-political and all of the people involved are unpaid volunteers, except for expenses. If you do not yet support us but after reading this Newsletter feel you would like to, or even just want to tell us which issues you believe we should be dealing with, just fill in the enclosed green slip and put it through the letterbox of your Road Representative. Their name and address is on the slip. Thank you.

Dates for the Diary

Date	Meeting	Time	Place
Thursday 4th Jan 01	Members' Meeting	8.0 p.m.	Bromley Court Hotel.
Thursday 8th Mar 01	Annual General Meeting	8.0 p.m.	Bromley Court Hotel.

Everyone is welcome at our meetings - but please check the hotel 'activities board' in the foyer, to make sure you go to the right room.

Peter Pain (Editor)

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (Update by A.Barwell)

Child Safe Scheme in Bromley Town Centre

Details of a new scheme are being given to children by the Police at schools. Certain shops will carry a special 'logo' and certain staff members will wear a special 'badge'. Children who are lost or frightened will know where or who to go to, to be safe.

Mobile Phone - Street Crime

The local police are operating a mobile phone security marking service for young people in an effort to reduce street theft of these phones by other young people.

Bogus Callers

A crack-down has started on 'Bogus Caller' thieves, with the introduction of a 'Distraction Burglars' Taskforce.

Crime-Stoppers

This service now operates in the Bromley area on 0800 555 111. Information calls about crimes can be anonymous if required.

First Check and Repair Service for Senior Citizens

Age Concern now holds a list of 'vetted' trades people. Their present telephone number is 8663 3711, but this is due to change.

Local Story

One of our more senior residents was having an afternoon nap on his bed and suddenly realised that someone had just left the room. He had heard nothing. Not much was taken that time. The incident was followed by a full scale 'white van with logo and a ladder' job with serious losses. Second attempt burglaries seem the norm so beware - and do check your security measures regularly. Remember Yale type night latches alone on exterior doors are no deterrent, a 5 lever deadlock is more effective. If you have a burglar alarm team up with neighbours to act as key holders and observers.

Insurance does not replace treasured items nor undo the distress and aggravation of a burglary.

PLANNING

Unitary Development Plans (UDPs)

These are the planning bible for boroughs such as Bromley and Lewisham. They are revised about every 5 years and after public consultation and usually a Public Inquiry, they are submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. Once approved they become a statutory document and must be followed.

Bromley and Lewisham are both in the process of a revision. We have responded in some detail during the consultation period and we are now waiting for the Deposit Draft to be completed. That will be everyone's penultimate chance to raise objections or seek changes. The last chance will occur when the Deposit Draft is considered at a Public Inquiry. In the past we have attended these and had our say, sometimes successfully. If necessary we shall do so again.

Planning Applications

9 Spencer Road

This is at the junction of Spencer and Oaklands Roads. Although we objected on grounds of over-development, approval was given for 6 town houses on the site. Building has now been completed.

3/3a/5 Spencer Road

There have been several applications for a block of flats on this site in place of 3 detached houses. Each time we have objected on grounds of over-development and happily each time Bromley's Planning Committee have felt the same and asked the developer to reduce the size. On 2 occasions the application was scheduled for an Appeal hearing but each time it was deferred. Finally the developer submitted plans for a 3 storey block of 22 flats which was approved in August.

31-33 Downs Hill

At the end of last year Berkely Homes submitted plans for the demolition of these 2 houses and the building of 10 new detached houses in their place. The houses are in a Conservation Area and apart from the felling of over 120 trees the development would materially degrade the Conservation Area. Many people including ourselves wrote objecting and Bromley were minded to reject the scheme. Berkely Homes then submitted fresh plans for 8 houses on the site, which was just as bad. However that application overlapped with notice from Railtrack that they intended to build an underpass between the Main-Line and the Catford Loop to ease future problems at Shortlands Junction. The Railtrack scheme, which will have a major impact on the area, is covered more fully in a later section on Transport.

The Synagogue, 28 Highland Road

After several revisions to their plans, as a result of local consultation with ourselves and the owners of adjacent properties, the Synagogue obtained planning permission earlier this year. The approved scheme allows them to rebuild and extend the Synagogue. It is sympathetic to the site and the least intrusive that could be designed given their need for more space. Recently they have submitted an application to modify the approved plan to give a 2-storey side and a single storey rear extension plus a new covered pedestrian entrance.

Warren Avenue Playing Fields

Lewisham have been promised funding by the Football Foundation to bring back pitch sports to the grounds. That will mean rebuilding the pavilion which was burnt down. They held a presentation of their proposals at the Bromley Court Hotel and that triggered a good attendance. Subsequently a planning application was sent to Bromley and approved. Our comments were mainly aimed at the need to maximise on-site parking and prevent street parking.

THE MILLENNIUM PROJECT

A Post and Plaque on the Greenwich Meridian

Some 18 months ago it was decided to mark the Millennium by identifying the Greenwich Meridian as it passed through our area. This fitted in with Bromley who were funding trees to be planted along the Meridian.

Originally the decision was made to erect 2 posts on the Meridian on each side of Farnaby Road. Designs were drawn up in-house by Leslie Tucker, a budget was voted at an AGM and then the fun started. Many manufacturers of street furniture and similar items were asked for quotations and it soon became clear that casting the posts in iron or aluminium was prohibitively expensive, simply because they were one-offs. To our surprise it was more cost effective to make them in heavy gauge stainless steel. So the final decision was made to commission one post and a pavement plaque, both suitably engraved and lettered. After several visits to factories a firm in Leeds was given the contract.

When we told Bromley of our plans they agreed to fix them in the footway and to assume subsequent responsibility for them. That however involved legal documents and we were very glad of our Hon Legal Adviser Richard Thomas. We had also reached agreement with Bromley that the Mayor would unveil the Meridian Post and with Shortlands Golf Club that we could use the clubhouse for a reception after the unveiling.

Sunday the 9th of April was probably the highlight of the year for the Society. After early rain the day was bright if breezy. Some 200 people turned up to watch the event. The Mayor, Councillor Sue Polydorou, arrived on time and proved to be a very good sport when the official photographer asked her and Leslie Tucker to sit on the cold ground by the Meridian Post. Later the Golf Club exceeded our expectations with the quality of their buffet and happily speeches were kept short and to the point.

Although there will not be another Millennium for a while, ideas are already being bounced around about what else we could do in the future.

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

Ever since the old Greater London Council ceased to exist and the Park came under the control of Lewisham, the management of the Park has tended to be short-term, even day to day. Six years ago Lewisham tried to tackle the problem by leasing the Park to David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) for 99 years. Unfortunately for Lewisham, but fortunately for local users, DLL's plans failed to take proper account of the fact that in planning terms the Park is designated Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), a designation which limits buildings more strictly than the equivalent controls over Green Belt. Inevitably the DLL plans went to a Public Inquiry and all of them were rejected.

Lewisham then contracted DLL to manage the golf course and maintain the rest of the Park for a period of 5 years. At the same time they set up a Joint Working Party comprising users and themselves. The aim was to give users a voice and to produce a management plan. The management plan was produced and approved by the Council. However listening to the users' voice was variable ranging from total deafness to a slow realisation that they were not going to go away and more recently a preparedness to consult.

This Society played a major role at the Public Inquiry and since then has been a consistent and persistent member of the Working Party. We also made a substantial contribution to the Management Plan.

In last year's Christmas Newsletter we reported that following the end of the DLL contract - who in the meantime had been taken over by Whitbread - Lewisham were seeking a new contractor. There was no creditable response to the first attempt, so a fresh exercise was started to look for a short-term contractor (6 months) whilst a longer term contractor was sought. A company called Wickforce, now renamed BPP Ltd., secured the short-term contract which ran from November '99 to May '00, and could be extended by monthly increments if necessary.

A period of 6 months in which to find a long-term contractor proved hopelessly optimistic. Originally 12 firms expressed interest and by March they had been reduced to 6 tenderers who were invited to submit detailed bids. By November, the 6 had been further reduced to 3, but each of them had gaps in their offering. They will be informed about those parts of their tender which need attention and asked to submit a 'best and final' tender early in 2001. By the time they have been examined by the Evaluation Panel it is unlikely that a new contractor will be in position before late spring 2001. Instead of taking just 6 months the whole process could end up taking nearer 18 months.

If the tenderers pay proper regard to the Objectives and Constraints in the Invitation to Tender documents, then improvements should result. Although we have printed them before it is worth reminding readers of those Objectives and Constraints.

Objectives

- * Upgrade the existing golf course and clubhouse facilities.
- * Retain pay-and-play style of golf course operation.
- * Improve golf practice facilities.
- * Find commercially acceptable uses for the Mansion and Homesteads.
- * Provide a range of informal recreation facilities and ensure continued public access to the Park.
- * Maintain, conserve and if appropriate enhance the wildlife value, historic features, nature conservation and ecology of the Park.
- * Generate a commercial return to the Borough of Lewisham.

Constraints

- * The Management Plan. (formally approved by Lewisham).
- * The Planning Brief. (formally approved by Lewisham).

Both of these documents are very specific about the listed building category of the Mansion and the Homesteads and that practically any work to the buildings requires both planning approval and the support of English Heritage.

They also spell out the designation of Metropolitan Open Land and the sort of building, uses and activities which will not be permitted.

If any of the Constraints, particularly in the Planning Brief, are ignored then it is very likely that once again there will have to be a Public Inquiry.

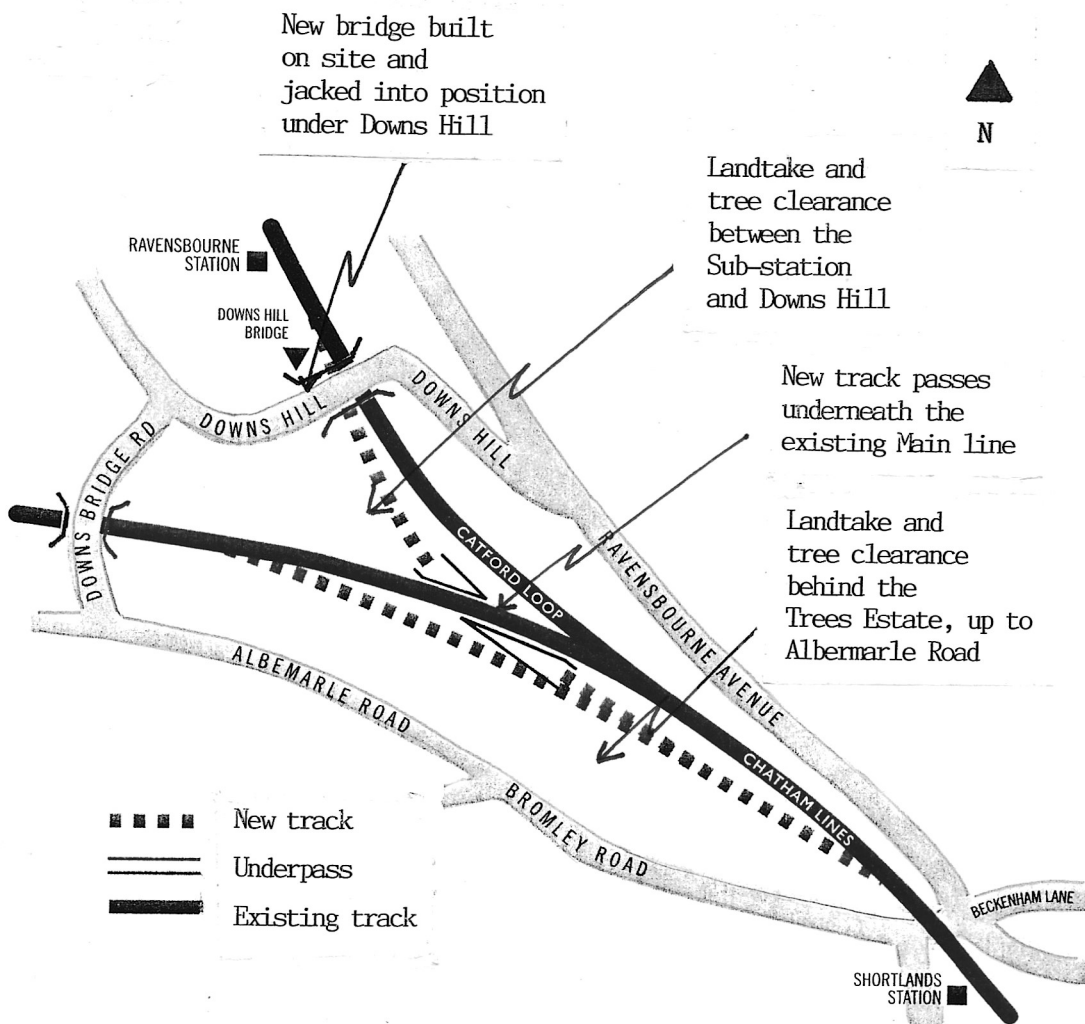
TRANSPORT

Railtrack - Underpass at Shortlands Junction

Earlier this year we became aware of plans by Railtrack to build an underpass just north of Shortlands Junction. The basic reason for this is because by 2003 Eurostar trains will be routed on the new fast line currently being built in Kent and will reconnect with existing lines at Fawkham. That means that instead of running on the 'main line' through Shortlands they will come in on the Swanley line. In itself that would not cause a problem except that freight traffic presently using the Swanley line to continue up the Catford Loop, will have to use the Orpington line to avoid holding up Eurostar passenger trains. As a consequence passenger and freight trains will have to cross at the junction.

To avoid potential problems Railtrack propose to achieve the crossover by sending the freight trains under the passenger trains. Note, freight trains cannot continue up the

'main line' beyond Shortlands because the loading gauge via Sydenham tunnel is inadequate. The following drawing gives an idea of the proposals.



The new track for the 'main line' will start from the London side of Shortlands station and it will rejoin the old track before Downs Bridge Rd. It will also branch right to go under the 'main line' track and join the Catford Loop line before Ravensbourne station.

To achieve that there will be both temporary and permanent land-take from behind the Trees Estate in Bromley Rd right up to the Sloane Hospital. There will also be land take from the sub-station at the junction up to Downs Hill involving the demolition of No. 31 and most of the garden of No. 33. This land-take will result in the loss of trees behind the Trees Estate but the severest loss will be between the new underpass and Downs Hill.

To achieve the necessary gradients and the underpass, the line joining the Catford Loop will be in quite a deep cutting with piling to prevent land slip. There will also new bridges for the underpass and Downs Hill. These will be fabricated on-site and jacked into position. In addition, to avoid disruption to rail traffic and minimise night work, materials to and spoil from the site will be moved by road, using both the Trees Estate and Downs Hill. The latter HGV traffic will mainly use Ravensbourne Avenue but some traffic may use Farnaby Rd. Details are still not clear.

Since we first learnt of the proposals, more information and detail has become progressively available. Much of it has changed over the months as Railtrack appear to be trying to take account of objections and concerns communicated to them. It will probably not be until after the Public Inquiry and the 'Conditions' imposed are known that we will understand exactly what will be done and when and the steps which will be taken to mitigate the effects on the locality.

As a result of our own correspondence with Railtrack and the DET&R, we submitted a 38 page document (including appendices) in which we enlarged upon our concerns and requested the Inspector to obtain appropriate assurances from Railtrack on the 9 major points in our representation. As is normal for Inquiries copies of documents are sent all parties. Our representations led Railtrack to respond in November, giving further assurances on some points and changing their earlier proposals on others, mainly trees and transport. Unfortunately, they did not include the relevant plans or drawings for the changes. So we are not yet sure whether they will be for the better. However, we have asked them to send us copies when they are available.

The Public Inquiry is programmed to commence on 5/12/01 and to ensure that time is not wasted at the Inquiry, the Inspector called a pre-Inquiry meeting. At that meeting he clarified his remit, which in summary is:

- * The justification of the proposed work, its benefits and the consequences of not going ahead.
- * The justification of the proposed land-take, the viability of alternatives, including the need for compulsory land acquisition.
- * The likely effects of construction and operation of the scheme on local residents, businesses and statutory undertakings.

- * The likely effects of construction and operation on the environment including ecology, nature conservation and the built heritage.
- * The adequacy of measures to mitigate adverse effects.
- * The justification for the demolition of 31 Downs Hill and the effect on the Downs Hill Conservation Area.

The Inspector stressed that the foregoing did not preclude him from considering any other matters which he may decide were relevant. He also clearly stated that his remit excluded matters such as government policy, matters of law and compensation.

Residents' Parking Scheme - Extension.

Last year Bromley gave notice that they were considering extending the Residents' Parking Scheme and all households likely to be affected were sent an explanatory leaflet and their views invited.

Roads such as Ravensbourne Ave, Farnaby Rd, Highland Rd and Grasmere Rd were directly affected. Adjacent roads were of course indirectly affected as commuters and shoppers were progressively forced further away from the town centre.

By mid-summer the extended scheme had been implemented and residents began to see the advantages/disadvantages depending upon where they lived. In some cases there is no doubt that car parking problems have simply been moved from one road to an adjacent one. The Transport Officer who is concerned with the Town Centre Scheme is Colin Dorne and he has said that he would welcome written comments and practical suggestions aimed at making the scheme work safely. The same officer is very involved with the traffic aspect of Railtrack's proposals for Shortlands Junction. He will be one of Bromley's 'expert witnesses' at the Public Inquiry, so at present he has a pretty full work load. If you wish to write to him his address is Transport Engineer Environmental Services, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH.

Traffic Calming Ashgrove/Calmont Roads

After a fatal accident and much lobbying by local residents, Lewisham produced a scheme for humps and yellow lines at the sharp bend in Ashgrove Rd and cushions thereafter up to the boundary with Bromley. Bromley were consulted as is required when work in one borough could impact on an adjacent borough. Despite the proposals receiving overwhelming support from residents in Ashgrove and Calmont Rds (Lewisham) as well as Warren Avenue (Bromley), Bromley objected on the grounds that it would send traffic onto other roads, including the A21. An argument that locals regard as spurious.

However, Lewisham had to take account of Bromley's attitude and have put forward a substantially reduced scheme to provide cushions, instead of humps, either side of the bend in Ashgrove Rd and nothing at all in the rest of Ashgrove Rd and Calmont

Rd. A contract has been let and work should start at the end of November. As a Society we reluctantly accepted the amended proposals as better than nothing. Plus they did have the potential to be extended if they were obviously inadequate. Local residents however were very unhappy with the watered down plans and have protested strongly. They rightly felt that they had been badly let down by both Bromley and Lewisham, but particularly Bromley.



CHRISTMAS CAKE RECIPE



(Repeated by popular request)

Ingredients

1 cup of water
1 cup sugar
4 large eggs

2 cups dried fruit
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 bottle of whisky

1 cup brown sugar
8 oz nuts
juice of 1 lemon

Sample the whisky to check for quality.

Take a large bowl, check the whisky again to be sure it is of the highest quality.

Pour one level cup and drink. Repeat.

Turn on the electric mixer and beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl.

Add 1 teaspoon of sugar and beat again.

Make sure the whisky is still OK.

Cry another tup.

Turn off the mixer.

Break 2 eggs, add to the bowl and chuck in the dried fruit.

Mix on the turner.

If the fried fruit gets stuck in the beaters - pry it loose with a drawscraper.

Sample the whisky to check for consistency.

Next sift 2 cups of salt - or something - who cares!

Check the whisky.

Now sift the lemon juice and strain your nuts.

Add 1 table spoon of sugar or something - whatever you can find.

Grease the oven, turn the cake tin to 350°.

Don't forget to beat of the turner.

Throw the bowl out of the window.

Check the whisky again and crawl to bed.



Happy Christmas



R.V.P.S. OFFICERS (DECEMBER 2000)

Chairman	Elizabeth Davies, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 OBT
Vice Chairman	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BRI 4AS
Secretary	Roy McCarthy, 16 Ravensmead, Road BR2 OBT
Treasurer	Brian Sanders, 41 Farnaby Road, BRI 4BL
Auditor	Wally Carloss, 28a Parkhill Road, BR2 OLF
Planning Officer-Bromley	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue, BRI 4BG
Planning Officer-Lewisham	Paul Bennett, 12 Elstree Hill, BRI 4JE
Membership Secretary	Paul Bennett, 12 Elstree Hill, BRI 4JE
Newsletter Editor	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BRI 4AS
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Roads & Traffic Rep.	
Tree Warden	Arthur Barwell, 14 Grasmere Road, BR2 4BA
LBBRF Delegate	
Police Consultative Com. Rep.	Kay Lincoln, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 OBJ
BPP Joint Working Party Rep.	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BRI 4AS
Hon Legal Adviser	Richard Thomas, 118 Ravensbourne Avenue, BR2 OAX

ROAD REPRESENTIVES

Bromley Ave./ Karen Ct. /	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue, BRI 4BG
Grasmere / Highland Rds.	
Coniston Rd / Ullswater	Barbara Price, 85 Coniston Road, BRI 4BG
& Hawkshead Closes	
Downs Hill / Crab Hill	Barbara Brown, 34 Downs Hill, BR3 5HB
Elstree Hill / Hillbrow/	Daphne Robeson, 2 Lynton Court, London Rd BRI 3B2
Oaklands / Spencer Rds.	
Farnaby Rd (1-108)	Audrey Burford, 90 Farnaby Road, BRI 4BH
Farnaby Rd (109 +)	Maureen Johnson, 69 Farnaby Road, BRI 4BN
Madeira Avenue	Ray Terrett, 70 Madeira Avenue, BRI 4AS
Ravensbourne Ave. (evens)	Ann Rowsell, 164 Ravensbourne Avenue, BR2 OAY
Ravensbourne Ave. (odds)	Ann Freiter, 128 Ravensbourne Avenue, BR2 OAX
Ravensmead Rd	Kay Lincoln, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 OBT
Warren Ave./Calmont Rd.	Alan Weatherley, 50 Warren Avenue, BRI 4BS