



## EDITORIAL

Every year about now we distribute our bi-monthly Newsletter to each household in the area. The intention is to get it through everyone's letterbox before Christmas, so our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. This is also a good time to say thank you to everyone who has supported the Society - actively or passively - during the past year.

Although the name of the Society sounds wide-ranging, 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.

The main activities during the past year have centered on planning matters, in particular the Public Inquiry into Railtrack's proposals for an underpass at Shortlands junction and the draft Unitary Development Plans of both Bromley and Lewisham. Beckenham Place Park has also taken up a fair bit of time.

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## Dates for the Diary

Thursday 3rd January 2002, Members Meeting, 8.0pm Bromley Court Hotel.  
Thursday 7th March 2002, Annual General Meeting, 8.0pm Bromley Court Hotel.

All are 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)

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## TRANSPORT

### Railtrack - Shortlands Junction Grade Separation

In the general Newsletter last year we reported on the pre-Inquiry correspondence with Railtrack and their preparedness to make concessions when pushed. We also included a plan and description - with reasons - for what was proposed.

The Inquiry took place last December and lasted the best part of a week. We had made 2 submissions to the Inspector, the first consisted of 40 pages, including appendices, in which we set out our objections. As is normal in these situations a copy was also sent to Railtrack. They responded directly on many of our objections and proposed variants to the original proposals most of which were acceptable. As a consequence a second submission was sent to the Inspector and Railtrack. That was only 22 pages including appendices. It was that submission which was used at the Inquiry. In essence our residual concerns were environmental, i.e. noise pollution and traffic movements to and from the site (congestion - dust in summer - mud in winter).

At the Inquiry, Railtrack made further concessions to the many objectors, particularly to those in the immediate vicinity. As was expected the Inspector recommended the application be allowed with the concessions made by Railtrack. The Secretary of State duly approved the Transport Works Order.

Work commenced in July initially behind the Trees Estate, later in Downs Hill, near Ravensbourne station and behind the Sloane Hospital. Since then work has progressed rapidly and many have reported that it is not yet as bad as they expected. Railtrack appear to be trying hard to keep local residents in the picture and regularly issue "Notifications of Works". These specify day-day-day what is to be done, the location, time and expected noise level. Many have found this to helpful.

As promised the regular meeting between Bromley, representatives of local residents and Railtrack/Balfour Beatty, are taking place and have already proved of value. Despite an undertaking at the Inquiry not to have HGVs turning right under Short-

lands railway bridge, they proposed just that at one of the meetings. The reason was to take land-fill from the Downs Hill side to the Trees Estate side and avoid taking it elsewhere. After discussion and correspondence they have now devised a way to reduce the traffic movement and move the spoil on site.

There have been several reports of HGVs using Farnaby Rd rather than Ravensbourne Avenue. So far that route has not been approved, but it is difficult for Rail track or the contractor to act without better information. If anyone sees an earth-moving HGV which seems to be off course, it is important to try to note its registration number and the time and report it as soon as possible to the Railtrack /Contractor Help-line which is 0800 917 7145.

### **Traffic Calming, Ashgrove Rd/Calmont Rd/Warren Avenue.**

Last year it seemed as though the scheme was being blocked by Bromley, as an adjacent borough. However there was a change of heart and they finally agreed Lewisham's proposals. Work was quickly put in hand and was completed by April. So far the speed cushions appear to have had the desired effect and most vehicles now travel more slowly along that section.

### **Residents Permit Parking Scheme - Bromley.**

Bromley are reviewing the Permit Parking Scheme and households in our area will have received a "Review Questionnaire" for the Town Centre scheme which affects about 6 of our local roads.

### **BECKENHAM PLACE PARK**

Twelve months ago after a chequered history of trying to find a contractor to manage the Park, Lewisham had finally tackled the problem seriously and employed an Agent. The remit was to advertise and identify firms or consortia who were interested and capable of managing the Park's golf course, buildings, open spaces and woodlands.

The initial response was 12 companies expressing interest. They were sent a detailed Planning Brief, the Management Plan, a schedule of the Council's objectives, plus much other supporting documentation. Progressively the 12 were reduced to 5 serious contenders. At that stage 2 members of the Working Party were invited to join the Adjudication Team, they were however subject to a confidentiality agreement because of the financial information they would learn.

After several meetings the 5 were reduced to 3. All of the final 3 had weaknesses. They were informed of these and asked to produce a "best and final offer". Even then the final offers still had problem areas. That created further correspondence and

resulted in a preferred tenderer plus reserve. The reserve tenderer was the short term contractor, BPP Ltd., who had been managing most of the Park since the David Lloyd Leisure contract ended. However as they were not the preferred tenderer, Lewisham took the precaution of ceasing the BPP Ltd. contract and taking over management of the Park themselves until negotiations were completed with the preferred tenderer.

The preferred tenderer is the Royal Victoria Hotel Group which is based in Hastings. Their plan is to renovate the Mansion for use as a conference centre. To renovate the Stable Block and build on the other 3 sides to form a quadrangle for a 40 bedroom hotel which would also house the golf clubs, the pro shop and public rooms for refreshments.

The golf course would remain public pay-and-play and the plans include improvements to the playing surface plus a practice area and putting green.

The building work will need fully detailed plans to be sent to English Heritage for their approval of the enabling development i.e. change of use to make the buildings viable. After that the plans will have to be approved by what used to be the Department of the Environment because it will need a variation to the Borough's Unitary Development Plan. It is likely that the GLA will also have to be consulted. So the tenderer has some hurdles to overcome.

A potential area of conflict is the proposal to create an improved golf practice area which may or may not become a small driving range. That is likely to displace up to 3 of the existing holes. The conflict will be about where they go. To date Crab Hill and Railway field have been ruled out as ecologically too sensitive and not easily accessed from the golf course. That only leaves the Common at the Old Bromley Rd end and Summerhouse field at the Ravensbourne Ave end. So far the Common is seen as the preferred area because of access over the railway bridge. But, the loss of even part of that open space will understandably be vehemently resisted by many people. If the idea is to progress at all, Lewisham recognise that there will have to be trade-offs. One proposal is to create a recognised footpath across the golf course to give easier access to the Mansion from the railway bridge, plus restoring the old lake to make a feature of it and take the path along its sides.

The whole tender is subject to ongoing negotiations affecting both legal and planning issues. At present the likely outcome cannot be foreseen.

### Summerhouse Field

This is still let to a group called FC86 under a Tenancy at Will i.e. either party can pull out after a short notice. The aims of FC86 are to provide football facilities for young people and at present Lewisham confirm that the only constraints on the use of the field are that people should not try to cross the pitches when games are in progress

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and that dog owners should prevent their pets from fouling the area or if that is not possible, take away the results.

Lewisham are also looking at alternatives to the kissing gate at the Ravensbourne Ave end. The problem is to prevent motor cycles being driven into the field but allow in push-chairs and wheelchairs.

## PLANNING

### 5 Oaklands Road - Greenhill

This building which used to be a retirement/care home is owned by Mission Care. They have submitted proposals which in effect will result in its demolition and rebuilding as a Care Home to modern standards. In the process it would grow from 26 bedrooms in the old building to 60 in the new one. Inevitably the new building will be bigger than the old one. The Society did not object to the proposed use of the building, but did make some 5 points on matters of detail. That led to a second set of plans which went some way to reduce its impact in height and footprint. The revised plans also improved parking arrangements and retained more tree cover at the rear.

Since then a 3rd set of plans has been deposited. These give more detail but do not make any further significant changes. Those plans will be considered by Bromley before the end of 2001.

### Unitary Development Plans

These are the planning policy documents which after approval by the Secretary of State become statutory instruments and the principles by which all future planning decisions will be made in the borough.

### Bromley

The Society has commented on the First Deposit Draft and are waiting the issue of the Final Draft. It is understood that this may be delayed until the GLA has issued its own strategic planning document. The Final Draft will presumably take account of that. If our objections/comments have not been picked up, the Society will have 6 weeks in which to restate them. At that stage any comments will have to be in the form of evidence to the UDP Planning Inquiry.

### Lewisham

Lewisham are more advanced than Bromley and their Plan is already at the Final Deposit Draft stage. Most of our amendments were accepted and we were content with the reasons given for those that were not. Unless something extraordinary happens we shall not be giving evidence at the Lewisham UDP Planning Inquiry.

## COMMUNITY PROJECTS

After the erection of the meridian post and plaque, the Society's thoughts turned to other potential community projects. Three were identified but realisation is proving more difficult than expected.

### Bus Stop Seat - Junction of Farnaby Rd/Ravensbourne Ave.

This proposal has been agreed by Bromley who have undertaken to provide the seat and fix it at our expense. However, we have recently learned that Metrobus have given notice to London Buses that they wish to discontinue the 351 service. London Buses have asked them to keep it going while they decide on future options and action. A decision is expected April/May 2002. Unofficially it has been said that the section of the route between Beckenham and Bromley may be kept as it is viable. However if it were to become a permanent route then the bus stops would be fixed and may not be at the present locations. Nothing further can be done until the outcome is known.

### Donation to Valley School.

The trip to Lullingstone Nature Reserve did not take place because of the foot and mouth epidemic and the Reserve was closed as a precaution. The Head Teacher has suggested 2 alternatives, a) an outdoor classroom or sensory garden and b) a walking bus which would need day-glo tabards for the children. The latter needs the agreement of parents and other parties before going ahead. So the concept of the outdoor garden is being supported.

### Local Landscape Proposals.

Discussions with Bromley about how to visually improve the bed at the junction of Warren Ave/Farnaby Rd/Bromley Ave are continuing, but resolution seems a long way away. Most of the proposals from Bromley would be too expensive for the Society or make minimal improvement. Discussions continue about other options.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (Update by A. Barwell)

### Emergency Calls

Recent statistics show that only 40% of 999/112 calls are actually emergencies. That is 60% are not. Many of these originated from mobile phones and were "silent", presumably activated accidentally. Last year the Metropolitan Police received 200,000 silent calls from mobiles. Obviously non-emergency calls can congest the system leading to genuine calls being delayed. If anyone wants the local Police for non-emergency matters, they can be contacted on 020 8313 1212 or if you have the

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facility, logging on to the Non-Emergency Minor Crime web site ([www.met.police.UK](http://www.met.police.UK)) and following the links.

### Burglar Alarms

Last year out of 290,000 response calls to activated alarm systems 270,000 proved to be false alarms (93%) with no evidence of an actual or attempted break in. The alarms were either set off by accident or were faulty. Because of the high level of abortive work caused by false alarms, the Association of Chief Police Officers issued new guidance which took effect in October. In essence this means that the Police will not attend an activated alarm unless there are additional indicators that an offence is being committed, such as a report from a member of the public. Even attendance to alarms monitored by a security company is being tightened up.

### Mobile Phones

The theft of mobile phones has increased quite dramatically, especially by young people from young people. Marking the phone inside the battery compartment with your post code and house number will help to get it returned if it is recovered. But, it will not stop it being used by the thief. However, keying in the following \* # 06 # should bring up a code number on the screen. Make a note of this and if the mobile is stolen report the code number to the service provider. They can block the handset even if a new SIM card has been fitted.

### MISCELLANEOUS

The following are genuinely attributed to various church bulletins.

- Don't let worry kill you - let the church help.
- This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the Church. Children will be baptized at both ends.
- Wednesday the ladies liturgy will meet, Mrs ----- will sing "Put me in my little bed" accompanied by the Pastor.
- Thursday 5pm there will be a meeting of the little mothers club. All ladies wishing to be "Little Mothers" will meet with the Pastor in his study.
- This being Easter Sunday we will ask Mrs ---- to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
- The Church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment and gracious hostility.

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### R.V.P.S. OFFICERS (DECEMBER 2001)

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 Carlross, 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
Railway Rep.	George Hudson, 20 Ravensbourne Avenue
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LBBRF Delegate	
Police Consultative Com. Rep.	Kay Lincoln, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 OBJ
BPJ Joint Working Party Rep.	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BRI 4AS
Hon Legal Adviser	Richard Thomas, 118 Ravensbourne Avenue, BR2 OAX

### ROAD REPRESENTATIVES

Bromley Ave./ Karen Ct. / Grasmere / Highland Rds.	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue, BRI 4BG
Coniston Rd / Ullswater & Hawkshead Closes	Barbara Price, 85 Coniston Road, BRI 3BZ
Downs Hill / Crab Hill	Barbara Brown, 34 Downs Hill, BR3 5HB
Elstree Hill / Hillbrow / Erin Close	Gordon Rowlands, 15 Inglewood Ct, Oaklands Rd.
Oaklands / Spencer Rds.	Daphne Robeson, 2 Lynton Court, London Rd.
Farnaby Rd (1-108)	Audrey Burford, 90 Farnaby Road, BRI 4BH
Farnaby Rd (109 +)	Maureen Johnson, 69 Farnaby Road, BRI 4BN
Madeira Avenue	
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. Ashgrove Rd.	Alan Weatherley, 50 Warren Avenue, BRI 4BS