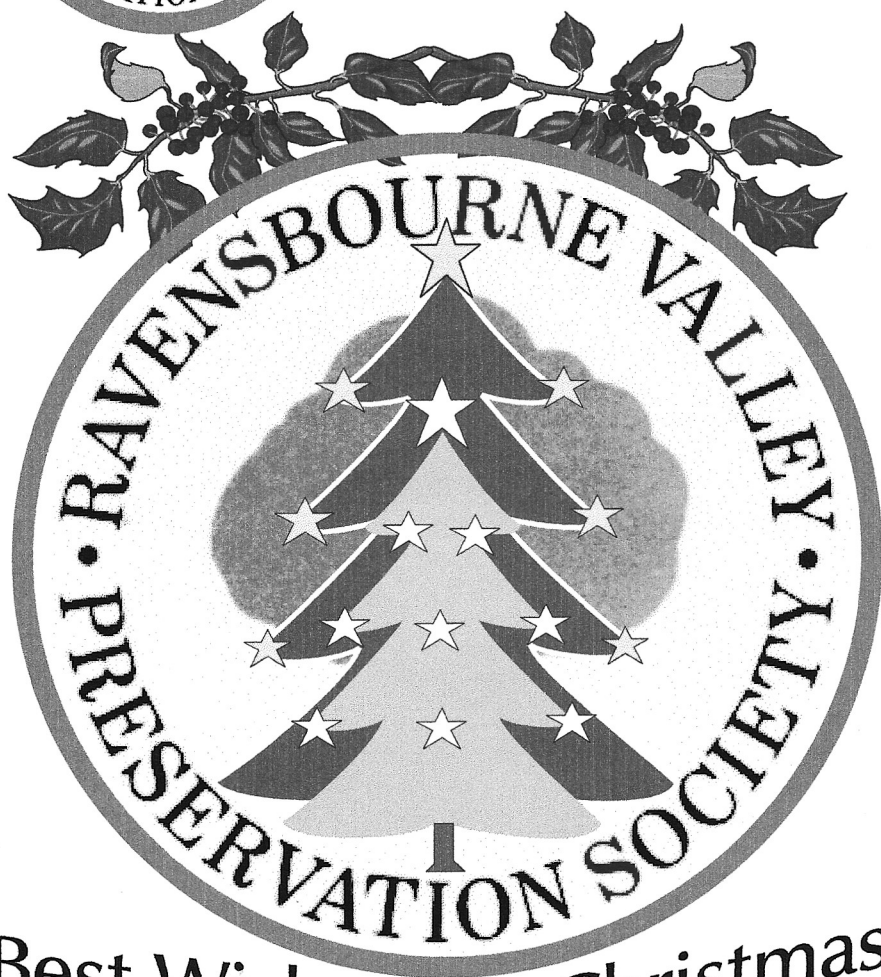




NEWSLETTER

5/2002

December 2002



Best Wishes For Christmas
And the New Year
To all our Readers

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 to all 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 - over 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 Road, Beckenham Lane, Downs Hill/Crab Hill and McDonalds at the end of Ashgrove Road. 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.

There have been no major issues during the year, but a whole series of planning and transport matters which have kept the Officers and some Road Reps busy. And of course, Beckenham Place Park is still ongoing and a final solution appears to be almost as far away as ever. Having mentioned transport matters, we currently do not have a Transport Representative for other than Railtrack issues. If anyone would be prepared to volunteer for this job please contact either our Chair Elizabeth Davies on 8460 0189 or our Secretary Tom Griffin on 8313 0306. You could help bring pressure to bear for some needed improvements. At present the work is shared out between several people and this dilutes the effectiveness of our voice with the two Councils.

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 9th January 2003, Members Meeting 8.0 pm Bromley Court Hotel.
Thursday 6th March 2003, Annual General Meeting 8.0 pm, Bromley Court Hotel

All are welcome to attend any of our meetings, but please make sure that you check the Hotel "activities" board in the foyer to ensure that you do not gatecrash some other meeting.

Peter Pain (Editor)

TRANSPORT

Railtrack - Shortlands Junction.

Following the Public Inquiry in 2000 at which we gave evidence, Railtrack were granted the Transport Works Order and immediately their contractors started work. For the first 4 - 6 months the heavy earth moving HGVs were a problem on local roads, but the general view of the residents in the locality was that it was not as bad as had been expected. Although those right adjacent to the site were seriously affected. The wholesale felling of trees also had an impact which will be with us for some years. By early autumn the bulk of the heavy engineering work was completed and the 2 reinforced concrete tunnels had been pushed into their final position. One tunnel went under Downs Hill and the other under the main up and down lines to Victoria. The latter weighed 4,500 tons and was 250 ft long. It was moved some 200ft to its final position. During 2003 the work will concentrate on changing the track layout plus the necessary alterations to the signaling systems. Trains should be able to use the new layout by mid-summer. Restoration work to the grounds of the Trees Estate will also be taking place. However, the replanting of trees will not be done until the planting season later next year, with some being

delayed until 2004. In all some 10,000 trees will be planted, the weaker ones being thinned out over the following 5 years as the stronger ones develop.

Traffic Calming Warren Avenue/Calmont Road

In the 3/2002 Newsletter it was reported that Bromley had marked out Warren Avenue for 2 more cushions and a red warning strip. That was wrong. They were there originally until Bromley had that section of road resurfaced. So they are being reinstated by Lewisham not Bromley, even though they are on the Bromley side of the borough boundary.

Gravel from Elstree Hill into Calmont Rd/Warren Ave.

The recent heavy rains and increased usage of Elstree Hill has resulted in gravel making its way into Calmont Rd. Passing cars have sent some of these stones into the windows of nearby houses and damaged parked cars. A request to Bromley to move it back onto Elstree Hill elicited the response that as Elstree Hill is unadopted the gravel is legally the property of the frontagers in Elstree Hill. Bromley wrote to the frontagers to ask a) their permission to remove and dispose of it or b) take it back up the Hill and dump it so that the frontagers could reuse it to fill the holes. Apparently the response from most of the residents was to ask Bromley to infill the holes. Many claimed that Lewisham used to do so before the boundary changes. As the hill is unadopted that is not something that Bromley can do free of charge. Lewisham Highways Department disclaim any knowledge of that practice, but as those were the days of direct labour rather than contractors, it is possible it happened unofficially. To date the matter is unresolved, but it is unlikely to go away.

Residents Parking Scheme.

Six of our roads are affected by the scheme and last year Bromley sent out a review questionnaire. Unfortunately the funding from Transport for London (part of the GLA) ran out and they were not evaluated. However, fresh funding was obtained for this financial year and they are now being processed.

PLANNING

General

At a recent Planning Seminar held by Bromley for Residents' Associations several useful issues were ventilated. The main focus of the seminar was a debate about "best value" but prior to this the attendees were divided into 5 workshops. They were charged to consider different elements such as; what matters to local people; improving the quality of development; improving development control services and related matters. All 5 workshops expressed the view that the drawings accompanying planning applications left a lot to be desired both in clarity and information. This was true of plans from some professionals and many laymen. There was also agreement that despite government pressure and targets to decide applications within a specified time, what mattered most was the quality of the decision and not how long it took. This, was particularly timely as these proposals would lead to a reduction in the time for objectors to respond.

Draft London Plan

The Mayor of London has published a draft London Plan and all boroughs were invited to comment. Bromley's comments picked up several points.

❑ The plan focused mainly on Central London with outer London being seen as a

dormitory, which implies more pressure on roads and public transport.

- ❑ Although the Green Belt and other open spaces are assured of protection that conflicts with housing targets of 23,000 homes each year until 2016.
- ❑ Increased waste recycling targets of 33% for household and 60% for municipal appear to be unachievable in the timescale required. He is also seeking powers to become personally involved in waste management.
- ❑ The Mayor also wishes to obtain powers to become involved in certain planning applications and negotiate legal agreements whereby the developer makes a contribution towards infrastructure costs. Councils already have these powers and exercise them.

Planning Applications

5 Oaklands Road - Greenhill

Last year we reported that the application to demolish and rebuild this Care Home to modern standards and more than double the number of bedrooms had not been decided. As many will have noticed approval was given and building work is well underway. One of the points we made was that both during and after construction, traffic and parking would be a problem. That has certainly proved to be the case during construction. We will be keeping a close watch on what happens when the building is staffed and occupied.

14 Oaklands Road

Although we objected to the proposal to build a block of nine 2 bedroom flats on this corner site with Spencer Road it received approval and is now nearing completion. In truth it was a long shot because of the large number of old Victorian houses in that area which have already been replaced by blocks of flats.

4 Highland Road

The original proposal for a block of 8 flats was rejected by Bromley. A new plan for 7 flats has been submitted, this could well get approval.

28 Highland Road (The Reform Synagogue)

A recent application amended earlier approved applications and should be a happier solution to their space requirements. It retains most of the existing building and still keeps within the overall area of the last proposal which was for a complete rebuild.

212 - 214 Ravensbourne Avenue

The application to replace 2 bungalows by 6 terraced houses has been approved. The plans do not include making up the road to a standard suitable for adoption by the Council.

44 Coniston Road

A proposal for five 3 storey town houses took no account of parking needs especially in Belgravia Gardens which adjoins the site. Letters of objection and a local petition were sent to Lewisham. Lewisham then wrote to the developer to say that they must incorporate existing parking space. Several months later there has been no response.

14 Elstree Hill

Proposals for substantial extensions to the existing property appear excessive. Construction started without planning permission and is now the subject of a retrospective application. To date 6 applications have been submitted. A worrying aspect of the proposal is the poor quality of the plans supporting the application and the lack of information on how this hillside site will be prepared to avoid physical risk to the adjoining property. The Planning Committee have considered the matter twice and each time a decision was deferred. On the last occasion they decided to make a site visit.

Shortlands Golf Course (Two mobile Phone Masts)

Originally Vodafone made an application for a mast 18.77 metres high which would be disguised as a tree. The surrounding trees are about 15 metres high so the mast would be nearly 4 metres taller. Before that application was decided T-mobile put in an application for a similar mast close by. Although applicants for such masts are usually encouraged to make joint use of a structure that means that the height is increased by some 3 metres. These proposals have caused a lot of concern to nearby residents, primarily on the grounds of radiation from the aerials and the potential effect on health. Unfortunately health fears are not material as a planning consideration so strictly speaking, the Planning Committee cannot take those concerns into account in their decision making. We have objected on the grounds that the golf course is designated Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and mobile phone masts are not permitted development on such land. However, one thing is certain, as mobile phone usage continues to grow, so the need for more and more aerials will increase in order to meet that demand. This is because each aerial is quite low powered and hence has a limited range. They also have a limited capacity to handle simultaneous calls. Bromley has rejected one of the applications.

Millwall Football Ground (Calmont Road)

The Club have erected a large bright metal cylindrical water tank in full view of the road. As the ground is MOL it is not completely clear whether planning permission should have been obtained. We have written objecting to the tank and if it is deemed appropriate for MOL, requesting that it be painted dark green to minimise the visual impact.

Unitary Development Plans (These set the framework for future development.)

Lewisham

The Public Inquiry prior to approval of the plan has been sitting for several weeks. The Inspector's report is expected Spring 2003.

Bromley

The 2nd Deposit Draft has been issued and objections invited. That draft will be the subject of a Public Inquiry, probably summer 2003.

For both sets of plans we made written submissions on matters which we felt would adversely affect our area in the future. In all cases subsequent revisions allowed us to withdraw our objections. It remains to be seen what further changes will result from the Inspector's report. By then outside influence from groups such as ours will be very limited.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Valley School

The new "sensory garden" at the school which we helped to finance, is now well advanced. The nearby allotment holders gave a lot of help and support especially with the planting. Although it will not be at its best until the spring, the school is happy for visitors to have a look. The only condition is that viewing should be by prior arrangement. The contacts are Sam French and Clive Ferguson, both can be contacted on 8460 1121.

Public Seat 354 Bus Route

The seat which is at the junction of Farnaby Road/Ravensbourne Avenue has been in position for several months. It has a plaque commemorating the Queen's Golden Jubilee and to date, has proved popular. London Buses are proposing to change the route from "hail & ride" to fixed stops. We have been assured that there will be a fixed stop near our seat.

Raised Bed, Junction of Bromley Ave/ Farnaby Rd/Warren Ave.

Discussions with Bromley continue but regrettably, apart from the lowering of the shrub growth, no real progress has been made.

Street Trees

Bromley tell us that because they have a very small budget in the Section concerned with street trees, when a tree has to be felled they may not be able to replace it. It has been suggested that Residents' Associations may wish to consider funding a replacement. Something we shall have to consider.

ENVIRONMENT

Abandoned vehicles

Councils now have powers to remove abandoned vehicles more quickly. If they can trace the last owner they can also be taken to court. The number to ring for dumped cars in Bromley is 8313 4557. The number for Lewisham is 8314 6000. If you have an old car you want to get rid of the Council will take it away free of charge: - call 8313 4416.

Graffiti

Bromley Council will remove graffiti from private property free of charge if it can be seen from the public highway. They will however require the householder to sign a consent in case the removal causes any damage. Or, if you wish to do it yourself they will provide gloves, brushes, goggles and chemicals etc. Call 8313 4557 for the Council to do it and 8313 4852 if you want to do it yourself.

Works to Trees

Because of recent moves, Bromley now has only one officer with the appropriate arboricultural knowledge and experience to deal with tree preservation matters and private trees. As a result the first priority of that officer is trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation Areas. Enquiries about general information on TPO designations should now go to Gwen Exford on 8461 7646 or if you want to discuss work on a tree in a TPO area or Conservation area, contact Coral Gibson on 8313 4516. A preliminary discussion with the Society's Tree Warden, Arthur Barwell, might be helpful, his contact number is 8464 9688.

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

Last year it was reported that a preferred tenderer had been selected to revitalise the buildings and maintain the Park and golf course. The ongoing negotiations which were referred to, continued all through the past year. They were slowed down somewhat by the election of a Mayor for Lewisham and all the consequential changes which followed. The present position is that talks are in hand for the preferred tenderer to take over the running of the Park under a special agreement prior to them obtaining planning approval for the various works that will be required to bring the listed buildings back into full use. The Joint Working Party and the Friends of the Park have serious reservations about that proposal. Recently they sent a joint letter to the Mayor and the Executive Director for Regeneration setting out their concerns and the reasons. The letter brought a polite response but no commitment.

More recently and at the 3rd time of asking, the preferred tenderer, Dr. Shin of the Royal Hotel Group and his team gave a presentation about his proposals to the Working Party. In essence what they had to say was a repetition of what was already known except that a 200 seat conference centre to the north of the Mansion is now included in the proposals, this will be a new building.

In summary, the proposals after obtaining planning permission are:

- ☐ To refurbish the Mansion internally and externally to be a Conference Centre with seminar and group meeting rooms plus refreshment facilities.
- ☐ To build a new 200 seat conference hall north of the Mansion between it and the Homesteads.
- ☐ To refurbish the Stable Block, demolish the Homesteads and outbuildings and create a 40 bed 3 star hotel with a public restaurant and incorporate a new golf club area plus an ecological study centre.
- ☐ To renovate the golf course.
- ☐ To build a driving range/practice area of 30 bays at the Beckenham Hill end and 20 bays at the Mansion end. This will be in place of the three holes numbered 8, 9, & 10.
- ☐ To resite the 3 holes displaced by the driving range onto the Common east of the railway. Present plans show the whole of the Common being used for golf.

Car parking facilities seemed vague, but there were areas along the entrance road, in front of the Mansion and on the existing grasscrete area. Little reference was made to ecological matters such as the woodland and grassland areas or wildlife.

Once planning consent for all the above has been granted (which is likely to take at least 2 years), the timescale appears to be:-

The golf course and driving range first. The Mansion after 6 years and the hotel complex after 8 years - all within an overall lease period of 125 years!

Altogether quite a contentious package.



R.V.P.S. OFFICERS (December 2002)

Chairman	Elizabeth Davies, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 0BT
Vice Chairman	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BRI 4AS
Secretary	Tom Griffin, 9 The Chestnuts, Oaklands Rd. BRI 3SJ
Treasurer	Brian Sanders, 41 Farnaby Road, BR1 4BL
Auditor	Wally Carlross, 28a Parkhill Road, BR2 0LF
Planning Officer-Bromley	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue, BR1 4BG
Planning Officer-Lewisham	Paul Bennett, 12 Elstree Hill, BR1 4JE
Membership Secretary	Paul Bennett, 12 Elstree Hill, BR1 4JE
Newsletter Editor	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BR1 4AS
Railway Rep.	George Hodson, 20 Ravensbourne Avenue
Roads & Traffic Rep.	
Tree Warden	Arthur Barwell, 14 Grasmere Road, BR2 4BA
LBRRF Delegate	
Police Consultative Com. Rep.	Kay Lincoln, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 0BT
BPP Joint Working Party Rep.	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue, BR1 4AS
Hon. Legal Advisor	Richard Thomas, 118 Ravensbourne Ave, BR2 0AX

ROAD REPRESENTATIVES

Bromley Ave./Karen Ct./ Grasmere / Highland Rds. Brackenhill Lane	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue, BR1 4BG
Consiton Rd / Ullswater & Hawkshead Closes	Barbara Price, 85 Coniston Road, BRI 3BZ
Downs Hill / Crab Hill	Barbara Brown, 34 Downs Hill, BR3 5HB
Elstree Hill / Erin Close / Hillbrow	Gordon Rowlands, 15 Inglewood Ct. Oaklands Road.
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	Brian Atkinson, 94 Madeira Avenue BR1 4AS
Ravensbourne Ave. (evens)	Ann Rowsell, 164 Ravensbourne Ave, BR2 0AY
Ravensbourne Ave. (odds)	Ann Freiter, 128 Ravensbourne Avenue, BR2 0AX
Ravensmead Road	Kay Lincoln, 12 Ravensmead Road, BR2 0BT
Warren Ave./Calmont Rd / Ashgrove Rd./Belgravia Gdns	Alan Weatherley, 50 Warren Avenue, BRI 4BS