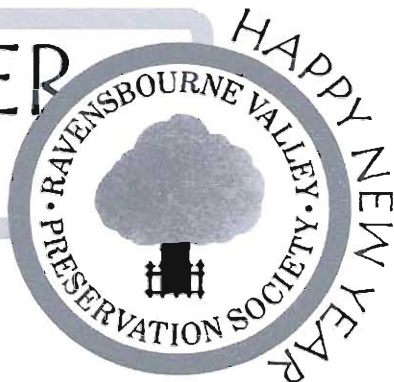


# NEWSLETTER

1/2010

January 2010



## EDITORIAL

Despite the continuing economic outlook we wish all our readers a Happy New Year. At this time of year our bi-monthly newsletter becomes an annual roundup of the year's activities and is distributed to all the households in the area. For those residents that are not familiar with us, it should be explained that, although the name of the Society sounds wide ranging, we are in fact a local Residents' Association. It covers an area roughly bounded by London Road, Beckenham Lane, Ravensbourne Avenue, Downs Hill, Calmont Road and the McDonalds at the end of Ashgrove Road. It also includes Beckenham Place Park. We aim to be a pressure group on issues which do, or could, affect us locally. This means that we deal with Councillors and officers of both Bromley and Lewisham.

The Society is strictly non political and everyone involved is an unpaid volunteer (except for expenses). If you do not yet support us but after reading this Newsletter you would like to do so, or wish to tell us which issues you think we should be addressing - just fill in the Green Slip enclosed to join for half price and pop it through their letter box or post it to your Road Representative. You will find their name on the green slip.

In the last New Year Newsletter we reported the untimely death of Paul Bennett our principal founder. It was decided that there should be a lasting memorial to Paul. As the Society started because of a large planning application at a house called Cedarhurst which had a mature Cedar of Lebanon in its grounds, another Cedar of Lebanon seemed appropriate. Also because another major planning application which the Society fought and won was over extensive building proposals within Beckenham Place Park and its handing over of the park to David Lloyd, the park seemed to be the obvious location. The cedar was planted in November, together with a suitable plaque, at a short ceremony attended by Paul's family and about 30 members. We hope it will be a suitable and lasting memorial and a worthy addition to the Park.

In the last issue we appealed for a volunteer to take over as Secretary as Tom Griffin had been forced to stand down due to ill health. We are very pleased to welcome Tony Morton who, without hesitation, agreed to take on the job. Because the

Secretary is an elected post, he has been co-opted until the AGM in March when he will stand for formal election.

We now have all of our Road Rep posts filled and all but one of our officers. That one is for Roads and Traffic which has been vacant far too long. At present Road Reps are having to deal with any problems on their respective patches. This is less than satisfactory as a single officer builds up contacts and expertise and can quickly become effective.

There have not been any really major issues during the past year, but a whole series of new and repeat planning applications/appeals plus a number of unresolved road and traffic problems which have kept the officers and some Road Reps very busy. Of course there is also Beckenham Place Park which continues, some 16 years after the Public Inquiry, with no real long term solution in sight. However, it has to be said that Lewisham are showing a greater sense of urgency and now seem genuinely to be trying to find one.

Finally a big thank you to everyone who has supported us actively or passively over the past year. With your continued support we hope that we will be able to report as least as many successes during the coming year as we are reporting in this issue of the Newsletter.

#### **Dates for the Diary:**

Thursday 4th March 2010 - Annual General Meeting 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010 - Members' Meeting, 8.00pm, Bromley Court Hotel

As usual please check the Hotel's activities board on arrival as, depending on the Hotel's bookings, our venue may have to be changed from our usual Wellington Suite for the AGM and the Ravensbourne Suite for our Members' Meetings.

Peter Pain (Editor)

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#### **BECKENHAM PLACE PARK**

Earlier in the year, South East London Transport (SELTRANS), which is part of Transport for London, proposed a 3 metre wide cycle path from Beckenham Hill through to Ravensbourne Avenue. On its way it would cut through the Common and Summerhouse Field some 8 metres away from the river. The Working Party were not keen on the proposal as they felt it would detract from the rural feel of the Park. Nevertheless a planning application was made and approved by Lewisham. To facilitate the passage of bicycles the kissing gate at the Ravensbourne Avenue end would have to go. Unfortunately this would also give access to motorcycles and mopeds. There are also plans to extend the path along the unmade part of Ravensbourne Avenue up to Crab Hill. This would make a "transport interchange" between Beckenham Hill and Ravensbourne stations. That application would be a matter for Bromley. When finished the path would look similar to the one put in by the Green Chain Walk which runs from the Ravensbourne station entrance to the top of Crab Hill.

The future options for the Park and Golf course management were laid out by Land Use Consultants and accepted by Lewisham. Those options were fully reported in our general Newsletter last year. It only remained to determine the options for the Mansion which was excluded from the previous study. During the year Lewisham commissioned two firms of consultants, Rees Bolter Architects and Ken Burlton Consultancy to report respectively on the fabric of the Mansion and options for its future use.

The Rees Bolter team did a very thorough job and produced a comprehensive report on both the present state of all areas of the Mansion and a costing schedule for essential repairs and renovations to bring it into good order. The final figure excluding VAT and inflation was just over £3m which compares very sensibly with estimates given at the Public Inquiry 16 years ago when Lewisham's estimate was for £5m and our expert witness's estimate was for £1.5m.

The consultants looking at the future use options were equally thorough but their report was more negative. As part of the exercise they looked at all the similar properties in the Greater London area and their uses, 27 in all. None could be compared directly with the Mansion and its location.

In conclusion they decided that the demand for the property would be limited because of:-

- The poor state of the market and expected value after refurbishment.
- An outlay of between £2 - 3m to do the refurbishment.
- It was not a recognised location for offices, residences or an hotel.
- The location was surrounded by public parkland.
- Lack of amenity land with the property.

The best way out that they could suggest was to trial a marketing exercise to test if any potential interests could be found. They warned that at the end of the exercise there may still be no satisfactory proposal for the property. In which case further consultation, enlarging the land around the Mansion or financial incentives may be required.

Both of these reports will be put before the Mayor and Cabinet early in 2010.

In the meantime the Lewisham Environmental Trust and the Friends of the Park have got together to try to set up a Trust to take over the Mansion. If they succeed they will have to persuade Lewisham that they have a viable and sustainable proposition. It may also mean that Lewisham have to fund and oversee the refurbishment of the Mansion. This would be a tall order in the present economic climate. However, their submission to the Mayor is being taken seriously.

## PLANNING

*126, Madeira Avenue* There have been 3 planning applications for this site. Firstly for 8 then 6 town houses and finally for 3 detached houses, all of which we opposed and were refused by Bromley. There was also an appeal hearing for the 8 town houses at which we spoke. That was also dismissed. The property then went back onto the market and is now in private hands.

*8, Madeira Avenue* Again there were 3 planning applications for this site. First for a 5 storey block of 9 flats, then for a 4 storey block with 7 flats and finally a 4 storey block with 4 flats. All were opposed by us and refused by Bromley. The last application went to appeal at which we spoke but the Inspector found for the developer. That was in May, to date there has been no action and the existing house is being let. Possibly development will start when the economic climate improves.

*La Capaninna, Grasmere Road* This is a bungalow between Cameron House and Townend Court. There have been 2 planning applications for this site. The first was for a block of flats, taller than the adjacent buildings, with a very large footprint virtually filling the site. A second, slightly smaller application was made for a 4 storey block of 7 flats. We objected to both - the first was withdrawn and the second was refused by Bromley. After a delay the developer appealed but the appeal was refused. Apart from us, local residents were also well organised in their opposition. Pending any further applications the bungalow is being let.

*113, Foxgrove Road* This house which is just within the Downs Hill Conservation Area, has had 4 applications. The first, for a block of 5 flats, was refused - went to appeal and was refused. A second application attempting to overcome the earlier reasons for refusal was submitted. Again that was refused by Bromley and again the developer appealed. Before that appeal could be heard the developer made a further application. Both the second and third applications were considered at the appeal hearing and one was allowed by the Inspector. The developer has now made a fourth application, this time for an additional flat in the roof space together with the enlargement of the flat in the roof space previously approved. We again objected and Bromley have refused it. Once again the developer has appealed and this will be an Informal Hearing on 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 10am in the Civic Centre.

*17, Spencer Road* This site has also had 4 Planning applications. Firstly for a detached house in place of a garage and part of the side garden. Next followed an application for a slightly smaller house. We objected to both and both were refused by Bromley. The third application was for a look-alike town house added to the group of 6 town houses. We objected but it was approved by Bromley. Finally the fourth application was for the effective reinstatement of the garage on the side of the yet to be built but approved town house - the original having to be demolished. This was a bite of the cherry too far and Bromley refused it.

*46, Ravensbourne Avenue* This application was for a bungalow in the rear garden of a house which was itself in part of the rear gardens of houses in

Ravensbourne Avenue and can only be accessed through the car park of the Shortlands Golf Club. We objected and Bromley refused primarily on the grounds of backland development and major objections from the Environment Agency who resist any proposals for hard surfaces nearer than 8 metres from the river. A second and almost identical application was rejected on the same grounds.

*2 Blyth Road / 37 London Road* This site is the old Blyth Road Hotel and the snooker hall which abuts Kwikfit. Earlier applications for a 3 storey block of flats in place of the hotel and a 4 storey block of flats in place of the snooker hall were approved. However Travelodge have now lodged an application for a 5/6 storey hotel with 97 bedrooms which covers both sites. We objected on the grounds that it was taller than nearby buildings. Because only 34 basement parking spaces were provided for the 97 bedrooms we made the point that inevitably parking would overflow into nearby roads which are a mix of yellow lines and meters until 6.30pm and a residents' permit zone. Bromley refused the application on the grounds of over-development and out of character with Blyth Road. It is interesting that one of our Councillors wrote supporting the scheme and another wrote opposing it. Our third Councillor was incapacitated and has since resigned. It is not known if there will be an appeal but we understand that Travelodge are considering reducing it by a floor.

*"Billingford", Elstree Hill* This saga goes on and on. It started with the construction without permission, of a side extension plus barbeque area which overlooked neighbouring property. Following complaints, Bromley sent an officer to inspect the work. In the course of this it was noted that the new front boundary wall was very much higher than permitted by the Unitary Development Plan. After a hiatus two retrospective applications were submitted for the side extension. Both were refused and finally the side extension was demolished after an Enforcement Order had been issued. The front wall remained. After prolonged inaction by the owners an application for reducing the height of the wall was submitted and approved. The work of actually reducing the wall was not carried out within the agreed timescale and Bromley began enforcement proceedings. In December, shortly before the matter was to be heard in court a further application was made. It being similar to the previous, approved proposal it was likely to be accepted. However the submitted plans are quite confusing and we are concerned that what is envisaged by the owner is not what the Council are expecting. In order to ensure that there is complete clarity between all parties as to what the final height of the wall would be we have asked the Council to check the submission. As much as anything, clarity should ensure that the applicant will not incur any further expense.

*Hillbrow, 14, Highland Road* An application was made to build a flank and rear extension to this Locally Listed building. And to convert it into 9 flats. We objected and it was refused.

An appeal was lodged but before it was heard a second application was made to build an even larger rear extension but no side extension. That was approved and the appeal withdrawn. Nothing happened for several months, then a third

application was made proposing to convert this large house into a special needs school for 35 pupils aged between 14 & 15 years. It was not known what category of special needs the pupils would be nor how it would fit in with Bromley's education policy. The proposal could cause problems with parking and traffic at peak periods and be disruptive due to noise. For these reasons Bromley have turned down the application.

*10, Madelra Avenue* This property is set well back from the road and is partially behind numbers 8 & 12/14. An application was made for a partial 2<sup>nd</sup> floor extension to which we did not object. However it was refused by Bromley. The applicant has appealed.

*Mobile phone mast - corner Ravensbourne Ave & Farnaby Road* This planning application was refused by Bromley who have strict guidelines about the effect on the street scene of masts and their ancillary equipment cabinets. An appeal was lodged but it was refused.

*100 Madelra Avenue* A mature eucalyptus tree has been felled. It was claimed that the roots were breaking up the steps leading up to the house. At the time of the proposed development at 100 / 102 it was said that the tree was protected by Tree Preservation Order No.9. However the tree surgeon gave Bromley notice of his intention to fell and as far as we could find out, no objection or requirement to plant a replacement tree elsewhere was made by Bromley's Tree Officer.

*119, Foxgrove Road* An application for substantial extensions was withdrawn and a second smaller application without a dormer was submitted. This still left the potential problem of overlooking the adjacent property and its closeness to the boundary. Because of that Bromley refused the application.

*67, Downs Hill* An application for a rear extension has been permitted.

*33 - 35 Farnaby Road* This is a care home and they made an application for a hanging sign on a pole. We objected as the proposal did not appear to comply with Bromley's guidance on such signs. In our view a more sympathetic solution in a residential area would have been either a sign on the house or at a lower level in the garden. Nevertheless it was approved.

*Ravensbourne Station* Having put in a ramp for wheelchair users on the down line, a similar ramp on the up line will soon be installed. A station with a greater need for wheelchair access, albeit with greater space problems for its installation would be Bromley South. The same could be said for Shortlands.

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## ROADS & TRAFFIC

*Possible diversion of 354 Bus Route - Crab Hill/Ravensbourne Avenue:*  
The making up of the previously unmade sections of Crab Hill and Ravensbourne Avenue has now been completed.

This work was funded by Transport for London (TfL). In the Autumn TfL sent a questionnaire to all nearby houses proposing a new route for the 354 bus so that it would pass Ravensbourne station - creating a mini "transport interchange". Many residents in Downs Hill and part of Ravensbourne Avenue were upset by the loss of a very convenient bus into Bromley or Beckenham. The Road Rep for Downs Hill ensured that everyone affected by the proposed change had a copy of the questionnaire and urged that it be completed regardless of whether they were for or against the change. A meeting was also arranged at the Shortlands Golf Club and a representative from TfL invited. About 50 local residents came along and between them they represented all of the nearby roads. The meeting was chaired by our Chairman who is a resident of Downs Hill and that was the hat he wore that evening. The TfL representative promised to make known to the decision makers all of the points that were raised. He expected a decision to be reached by the end of the year. However, by the time of this Newsletter going to print we have not heard any more. If the decision is made to reroute the 354 bus, Bromley will be forced to introduce parking restrictions in Crab Hill and the newly surfaced part of Ravensbourne Avenue as, at present, commuter parking on both sides of the road restricts it to a single lane. Any such restrictions would force cars which currently park there into other roads such as Foxgrove, Farnaby and Ravensmead Roads causing further problems for those residents.

If the decision is to reroute the 354 bus some residents aged 85 or over or with a disability may wish to consider the London Dial-a-Ride Service. There are several eligibility criteria and not everyone may be eligible.

Application forms which set out the criteria and how to appeal, may be obtained by telephoning 0845 999 1 999 or by writing to:-

London Dial-a-Ride  
Progress House  
5, Mandela Way  
London SE1 5SS

#### *Other Roads and Traffic problems still outstanding*

- Vehicles speeding in Ravensbourne and Bromley Avenues.
- The phasing of traffic lights at the junction of Ravensbourne Avenue, Beckenham Lane and Station Road. This is a particular problem when exiting Ravensbourne Avenue to turn right and traffic from Station Road continues after the lights have turned to red.
- The southern junction of Oaklands Road and London Road. This is exacerbated by heavy commuter parking in Oaklands Road and a truncated red line at the junction both of which cause stoppages when entering or exiting.
- The junction of Grasmere and Oaklands Roads. Because of the heavy parking in Oaklands Road and a short yellow line, exiting into Oaklands Road is virtually blind.

Until we have a volunteer to be our Roads and Traffic Representative who can build up expertise and press our case with Bromley or the police, as appropriate, these problems will continue to cause difficulty.

## COMMUNITY MATTERS

### ***Valley School***

The bird boxes, which we made a contribution towards, are now all in position within the school grounds and are being monitored. We also undertook to support the purchase of aquatic plants in and around a new pond which they were about to create near their existing ancient pond. This project, however has been delayed due to several practical problems so we have not yet had word from the school that the funds are needed. They will let us know when the project has been resumed.

***Queens Mead / Martins Hill and the Ravensbourne*** This project which involved reprofiling the river from the Glass Mill Pond to its course through Queens Mead including some new landscaping appears to have ground to a halt. It was being steered by the Environment Agency, Bromley and the Friends of Bromley's Parks and Gardens. We agreed to be a partner. In the present economic climate it seems unlikely to progress any further for some time. A feasibility study was carried out in 2007 by Arups.

### ***Queens Mead Bowling Club***

The Bowling Club located in the recreation ground near Shortlands station has vacancies for newly and not so newly retired men and women. Those who indulge in competitive sports should know that bowling can be really competitive or just as relaxed a game as it looks. Whether you care about winning or not, good companionship and new friendships are assured. For complete beginners there are instructors who would get you started.

If you are tempted then contact Brian Atkinson, our Road Rep for Madeira Avenue on 8460 5074 and he will give you more details.

### ***Security***

At a recent meeting of the Bromley Community Engagement Forum the police Borough Commander, Chief Superintendant Griggs, gave a presentation about burglary in Bromley.

His main points were:-

- Operation Bumblebee which specifically targets burglary and car theft has been restarted in the Metropolitan Police Area. The earlier successful campaign finished in 2003.
- The number of burglaries in Bromley increased early in 2009 but has reduced recently after increased police activity in targeted hot spots.
- Community Support Officers now visit all burglary victims and offer security advice to them and residents in nearby homes.



- Bromley's Trading Standards are introducing a "Registered Trader" scheme to cut down the incidence of bogus traders calling door to door. Unfortunately this still happens despite "cold calling" being illegal. Bogus callers are also sometimes a front for either a burglary at the time or for a later date.

The police have also issued several advisory notes about home and car security.

The salient points were:-

### ***Home Security***

- Mark valuable property with your post code and house number either by etching or by using an ultra-violet pen.
- Do not leave house keys, ID documents or valuables near doors, the letterbox or windows where they can be seen.
- Close and lock all doors and windows even if you are going out for only a few minutes.
- Leave some lights on if it will be dark when you return.
- Always keep sheds and outbuildings locked when not in use, even if you are at home.
- Cancel milk or other deliveries if you will be away for even a few days.
- Have a visible burglar alarm installed. The installer should be affiliated to either the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) or the Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB).
- Final locks on all exterior doors should be at least a 5 lever mortice lock.
- Fit movement sensitive security lighting to the perimeter of the property.

### ***Car Security***

- Because car manufacturers have introduced much better security systems over past years, modern cars are much harder to steal without the keys. Car thieves are now looking to steal the keys in order to steal the car.
- Never leave car keys near a door, letterbox or window.
- Always lock the car and keep the keys with you when getting petrol or leaving the car, even for a short time.
- When leaving the car never leave anything of value visible in the car.
- If you have more than one car and one is of higher value than the other, put the lower value car nearer the road when parking on the drive.
- If you have a high value car consider fitting a vehicle tracking system. A Thatcham category 5 system will receive police priority response, locate the vehicle and allow remote immobilisation.
- Always lock the garage even if there is no car in it.

For further information and leaflets contact 0300123 1212 or visit your local police station.

### ***Fire Security***

Both Help the Aged and Age Concern work with the London Fire service to advise on potential fire risk, suggest the best escape plan if fire does break out and, for those over 60, fit smoke alarms.

Help the Aged can be contacted on 0845 026 1055.  
Age Concern can be contacted on 01255 473 999.

### ***Useful telephone numbers***

For problems with waste and recycling - eg dropped paper or plastic - contact John Bosley; Waste Contracts Manager on 020 8313 4852.

E-mail [john.bosley@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:john.bosley@bromley.gov.uk)

For street cleaning the contact is:

Michael Cronin, Central Area Monitoring Officer, Street Services on 020 8464 3235.

E-mail [michael.cronin@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:michael.cronin@bromley.gov.uk)

Nuisance telephone calls can be stopped by contacting the Telephone Preference Service on 0845070 0707. If they are silent nuisance calls then call the Silent Callguard Service on 0870 444 3969

Unaddressed junk mail can be stopped by contacting the Royal Mail on e-mail - [optout@royalmail.com](mailto:optout@royalmail.com) or by writing to

Freepost RRBT-ZBXB-TITS  
Royal Mail Door to Door Opt outs  
Kingsmead House  
Oxpens Road  
Oxford OX1 1RX

For leaflets and flyers put through the letter box the only answer is to put a notice near the letter box saying "NO JUNK MAIL PLEASE"

### ***Graffiti***

As part of their campaign to keep Bromley free of graffiti Bromley have reissued a list of telephone numbers for members of the public to report instances.

Bromley will deal with:

Graffiti visible from the public highway - eg - on walls, fences, street names etc. including NTL green pavement boxes.

To report call - 020 8313 4557 or e-mail [csc@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:csc@bromley.gov.uk)

If the graffiti is in a park or open space, cemetery or recreation ground - report to 020 831 34471 or e-mail [landscape.helpdesk@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:landscape.helpdesk@bromley.gov.uk)

For graffiti on property of other utilities the following numbers should be used:

- For Post Boxes contact Royal Mail on 0845 774 0740
- For BT Phone boxes contact British Telecom on 0800 661 610
- For Bus Shelters / stops contact Surface Transport Call Centre on 0845 300 7000
- For railway bridges over roads or land owned by Network Rail contact Network Rail on 0845 711 4141 (it may take up to 28 days to remove)

- For electricity sub-stations in BR1, 2, or 3 contact EDF Energy on 0870 196 3090 (press option 5 to bypass various messages. They will also want to know the Post code, the sub-station number and street).

### Scams

We have written in the past about the various types of scam that have been perpetrated on unsuspecting members of the public. To avoid being caught out a good rule is "if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is".

Age Concern have now produced a free guide to scams called "Don't be Fooled" To order a copy call the Age Concern Information line on 0800 00 99 66 or visit the Age Concern website at [www.ageconcern.org.uk/information](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/information).

Whilst on the subject of scams, one of our members was recently involved in what he is convinced was an attempted scam. A Royal Mail special delivery package was delivered and signed for. After signing it was noticed that although the address was correct the addressee did not live there. Attempting to find out the sender the package was opened to reveal an expensive mobile phone. Later that day a young man called, said he was the addressee and asked for the package. He had no identification and it was refused. Later still he returned with identification, still suspicious our member asked where he lived. Our friend insisted on accompanying him to the address (which was in the same street). However, when they got there he just kept on walking. At this stage the matter was reported to the police and the package was returned to sender. Despite this he has since been sent a bill for over £200 for the phone. The bill has also been returned. If our member had handed over the package he would have been left with the bill for a phone he did not order and which he no longer had.

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In addition to all of the unintentional typos that may have been noted in the foregoing text we now include a few more - hopefully for your mild entertainment.

- ☺ A former ..... Councillor was taken in a hearse past the bowling green where he played on the way to his funeral on Friday.
- ☺ Under the bottom of Carl Davis they will play Sibelius's Karelia Suite
- ☺ ..... has been told he will need an operation to cure a heel problem. It was hoped an orthodontic specialist could deal with the problem.
- ☺ loving home required for a 15.2 hand 12 year old mayor.
- ☺ The capsizing of the Daphne in 1882 - the world's worst lunching tragedy and its consequences.
- ☺ A truly sumptuous multi-sensory cinematic feast that never fails to disappoint.