



October 2012 Edition

The Review

**You are invited to
WBRA/CCARA JOINT FORUM
to be held on Wednesday 7th November
at 8.00pm at Beckenham Public Hall,
4 Bromley Road, BR3 5JE**

Come and share a glass of wine and light refreshments after
the meeting!

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *The Review*. **Please note the change of venue for our Councillor's Forum this year. There is plenty of parking near the Public Halls**, and it is convenient for several bus routes, and for Beckenham Junction Station. The Forum will take a different form this year, as we are joining forces with Copers Cope Area Residents' Association for an experimental joint meeting. So some of the elected representatives from that Ward will be joining our usual cast of local dignitaries. See below, and see you there!

Also in this edition look out for a fascinating stories about a local hero David Bowie, and local artist, Tony Goodchild.

Judith Niechcial

JOINT FORUM WITH COPERS COPE AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

This year we are joining with CCARA in staging our autumn Councillor's Forum. WBRA have been working more closely with CCARA over the past year and have found mutual benefit in sharing knowledge of local issues and events, and experience of dealing with them! Much has been happening on the Beckenham Town Centre working group – see later. For a one off trial, the two Associations thought it would be nice to get the general membership together for one event and to get to know each other. For operational reasons we could not hold the event at the Spa as reported at our AGM, and it will have to be at Beckenham Halls, which is one the few places at present that hold the numbers each Association usually attracts to the meetings. This is slightly further to travel than WBRA's usual venue at the Library for some of our members, but on the other hand it may be closer for others! WBRA did use to hold its meetings at the Halls in the 90s. We do hope you will come along!

JANET AMBROSE – OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Janet was elected President of the Association at the AGM in May, following Geoff Slater's resignation. Many of you will know of Janet's unswerving support to the Association over more years than even she cares to remember. And she has often kept the whole show afloat when it could well have gone under. As President she will continue to have active role in our association and we will continue to have the benefit of her knowledge and wisdom in taking our work forward.

WBRA WEBSITE

Please do keep clicking on our website at <http://www.westbeckenhamra.org/>

for up-to-date news of local events and issues of interest. There are also articles on local history. If you would like to know more about the Association or to publicise events of interest to members, email: info@westbeckenhamra.org.

MEMBERS' EMAIL ADDRESSES

It would be extremely helpful to able to contact members by email to tell you of local events and issues between Reviews. (We understand that Blackheath Society have 75% of their memberships' email addresses.) We will not use your email for any purpose other than contact between WBRA and yourselves and will not pass them onto any other organisation or individual.

If you would be willing to share yours, would you please email mpenderwbra@btinternet.com with the heading "WBRA MEMBER EMAIL ADDRESS" and a message saying "*I agree that WBRA may use this email address to contact me on WBRA issues and for no other purpose.*"

Please don't forget to give your name and address at the end so we know it's you!

BROMLEY BIDS FOR MONEY TO IMPROVE BECKENHAM TOWN CENTRE

WBRA has participated in the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group, chaired by Councillor Tickner of Copers Cope Ward, to put in a bid to Transport for London (TfL) for money to improve Beckenham Town Centre. The bid has the support of local MP Bob Stewart, whose constituency includes the High Street, and Greater London Assembly member James Cleverly.

This bid will compete with others from all over London for a share in a pot of money - first to examine options in more detail and work up firmer proposals and then, if that meets with their approval,

money to make the capital improvements. The bid was submitted on 7 September and we expect to hear the outcome in November. The council has also made some money available right now for some immediate improvements.

The options so far have been worked up by a consultancy firm (called EAST). They are, at this stage, only first ideas of how the area – particularly around the High Street – could be improved. They will not necessarily form the final package if TfL money is secured. The working group will continue to examine all options and hopefully bring forward exciting proposals for our town.



The ideas focus mainly on the High Street from Beckenham Junction Station through to the War Memorial, but linking through to other areas and buildings of interest especially the three parks close by – Kelsey Park, the Croydon Road Recreation Ground and Beckenham Place Park. Along the High Street, four key focal points have been identified

- Beckenham Junction/ Rectory Rd/ Albemarle Rd junction
- High Street/ Kelsey Park Rd/ Manor Rd junction – now to be known as Thornton’s Corner in memory of Tom Thornton who, in the early 1900s, was the driving force in the creation of the Beckenham we now know, including the saving of

Kelsey Park from potential developers.

- Kelsey Square
- The War Memorial and art deco Odeon Cinema at the roundabout junction with Rectory Rd, Croydon Rd and Beckenham Rd.

Suggested improvements include widening pavements along the High Street, differentiating areas (eg the approach to Kelsey Square) with differing paving, improving street lighting and floodlighting of historic buildings, removing street clutter and providing more space for people.

A key aspect is to attempt to improve the road junction at Beckenham Junction, so that larger vehicles can negotiate it more easily, stop traffic build up and help keep heavy goods vehicles out of the High Street. However options are limited without the resources to replace the bridge over the railway.

A particular interest is the development of a Heritage Trail with information about the plethora of famous people and places in Beckenham both now and in the past. We hope there will be fixed boards with information as well as booklets identifying walks around the town and neighbouring areas. There are also proposals to have regular street markets.

But what can happen right now?

LB Bromley has made some money available for short term low cost measures regardless of the outcome of the bid. These could include improved signage to ensure locals and visitors alike know where our key places of interest are and a couple of additional town signs at focal points along the High Street, similar to but not necessarily identical to the town sign on Beckenham Green. There may also to be improved

street lighting for pedestrians, enhanced floodlighting of historic buildings, and shop front improvements. The working group is very keen to get empty shops tidied up and block boards over windows replaced by illustrated vynls. Also the many alleyways leading off the High Street could be improved by lighting and gateways, tidying up and, where appropriate, planting.

Work is to start immediately on a Heritage Trail booklet. WBRA Committee member, Cliff Watkins, has volunteered to write the booklet based on his extensive local knowledge. There are also lots of other ideas for highlighting our historic buildings and their famous connections which we, with Cliff, will be pursuing with the council.

Once the outcome of the bid is known sometime in November, we understand that the council will publicise the proposals and explain the process for working them up and indicate the rough timescales for the more detailed designs and public consultation.

Marie Pender

CHANGES IN THE NHS LOCALLY

Over the next few weeks, groups of doctors who have formed themselves into Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs – taking over from Primary Care Trusts under the Health & Social Care Act 2012) will decide on the future of the NHS in Bromley. Hundreds of members of the campaigning website 38 Degrees have signed a local petition, urging doctors to protect the NHS from profit hungry private companies like Serco. But the doctors will be coming under huge pressure from big companies, keen to make money from the government's NHS changes, to commission services from private health providers. 38

Degrees encouraged local people to get together **to make CCGs know their local patients want them to protect the NHS.**

A get-together of 38 Degrees members was organised at the Greyhound pub in Bromley on Saturday 6th October to plan for taking a petition to doctors on Bromley CCG? There was enormous concern about the fact that our bankrupt local hospitals are in the control of an administrator, who is already seeking expressions of interest for privatising services, and about the general decline in standard of medical care in our area because of financial cut backs. The closing of Orpington Hospital was also deplored, as was the so-called 'consultation' about health services in that area. It was agreed that it was important that local residents understood the implications of the proposed changes, so watch out soon for leaflets and other publicity.

To sign the 38 Degrees petition go to www.38degrees.org.uk/page/s/Protect_our_NHS_Petition

FANFARE FOR PENGE AND WEST BECKENHAM

The Fanfare took place as planned on 7 July at Penge Congregational Church. It was well attended mainly by parents and other connections of the many school children taking part. It was a large and varied repertoire featuring the Royston Primary School Choir, the Beckenham Junior Choir and Crystal Palace Band. There were some amazing talents on show celebrating our local heroes. Look out for future talent Bonnie – an excellent soprano and trumpet player! WBRA committee member Cliff Watkins produced a colourful programme for the event which linked the music to local history and people, in particular the work of Carey

Blyton, nephew of Enid, who wrote Bananas in Pyjamas.

CUTS IN COUNCIL BUDGET

LB Bromley will be holding a series of public meetings about the next round of spending decisions and what cuts they will have to make. They say they have to continue to find savings of over £30 million in the next four years. This is in addition to similar savings that they have made during the last two years and will mean more tough choices about how the council works and the services it provides.

At a similar meeting in Beckenham last year, there was an indicative show of hands that strongly supported a modest rise in council tax instead of cuts to essential services. However, the council chose not to act on this for 2012/13. The Conservatives have already indicated that the coalition is going to freeze council tax again in 2013/14.

Public meetings are being held in Bromley, Orpington and Beckenham to hear your views and talk about the savings they aim to make, and the future of the council, **The Beckenham meeting is at 19.00 on Monday 19th November, at Citygate Church Rectory Road.**

Marie Pender

CRYSTAL PALACE PARK

The Crystal Palace Community Association's legal challenge in the Royal Courts of Justice to the Secretary of State's decision to approve the London Development Agency's Masterplan planning application for Crystal Palace Park was heard before Judge Mr Justice Keith in March this year. The challenge was a consequence of the CPCA's concerns over the sale of 'protected' Grade II* registered Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) public

parkland for the construction of 180 private luxury apartments in blocks of flats, that formed part of the LDA application.

Disappointingly the Judge found against CPCA on all grounds. The CPCA's legal team considered there was merit in appealing his decision and papers were submitted accordingly. Mr Justice Keith refused an appeal and a further application for permission to appeal was made to the Court of Appeal. This too was refused, however a request to renew the application to an oral hearing has been agreed and will be heard in the High Court on the 31 October. The CPCA's 'protective cost order' has been renegotiated on new terms.

PLANNING

Barclays Bank

An appeal against refusal of permission for another two storeys on this building was heard in August, but at the time of going to press the decision had not been made.

Kent House Station Approach



The council has now agreed to adopt the road and work has just started, Another footpath on the eastern side will be installed, the road surface tarmaced and the circular green area restored. (The sycamore tree which threatens to

kill the pretty crab apple trees on the left side of the green area will be removed.) WBRA was keen to ensure that there would be some sort of fencing around the green to deter future parking, whilst safeguarding parking on other parts of the road. WBRA committee member Shirley Civil has doggedly pursued this issue for over a year, and we are grateful to Councillor John Getgood for his efforts on securing this success.

New B&B accommodation in Beckenham

Permission has been granted for two new B&Bs on Beckenham High Street. One is above the Lebanese restaurant (the first floor of No 80) in what was the old Conservative Club, and the second is above Manns Estate Agents (No 30). These “twinned” applications by Petreno Ltd will together provide 29 B&B rooms, a mix of single and double. Breakfast for both establishments will be provided in the restaurant and cafe at Nos 78 and 82. There is no parking offered on site, as there are excellent public transport links with rail, tram and buses. The developments could be a little cramped – getting 15 rooms into the first floor of No 80 looks quite tight. But on the whole, we feel that Beckenham is in need of hotel accommodation.

Manor Way

An application has been received to replace a 1970s bungalow at the rear of The Bailiff’s Cottage at 4 Manor Way with two 2 storey, plus attic, houses. The Bailiff’s Cottage is a Grade 2 listed building dating from the early 19th century. If you didn’t know there was a bungalow behind The Bailiff’s Cottage, that is because it is unobtrusive. Planning permission was given in the 70s on the condition that it was of just one story in height so that it could not be seen from the road in this conservation area. You may know that the plot next

door used to hold Lavender Cottage, but now a block a flats is nearing completion. It is worrying that once such a precedent is set, often the rest of the road follows like dominoes falling. We hope that will not happen in Manor Way. Residents in Burnhill Road fear that the proposed buildings will encroach onto their privacy, since the footprint of the bungalow is already close to the boundary. WBRA is opposed to this development. It should not be possible to view any new building above the Bailiff’s Cottage from Manor Way.

Public Toilets

The toilets at Elmers End have closed, with directions for people to use the community toilets at Tesco instead. WBRA feel that the trek to Tesco is just too far for many people who are not so good on their feet.

The Studio

Work is almost finished at the Studio. The CityGate pastor Julian Melfi showed members of the Town Centre Working Group around the building at the end of



August, and Cliff Watkins and Marie Pender went along. We are pleased to say that the restoration work has been done to high standard and we hope the building will once more provide a valuable community resource. There are several large rooms which can be used for a variety of purposes and even a

sprung floor dance room. CityGate hope to open it in January 2013. If all goes well we hope to hold future WBRA meetings there.

Car Park At New Beckenham Station

A planning application submitted to extend the car park at New Beckenham Station (on the Lennard Road side) will be welcome news for rail users, and hopefully reduce commuter parking in residential roads in the area. The additional parking will be located on the wasteland between the railway line and the gardens at the Lennard Rd end of Kings Hall Road. The plans are for permeable concrete and it is hoped that most of the existing trees will remain

Kings School of English



The link between the two Victorian buildings is almost complete. An architect has commented that the mainly glass construction may have been designed so as not to distract attention from the two fine buildings. However, sadly, the fascia is too dominant does indeed distract attention. It's a pity.

RE-CYCLING

Small electrical items can now be recycled at six new recycling banks which have been set up across Bromley. The nearest for WBRA area is in

Tesco's car park at Elmers End. Any small electrical with a battery or a plug can be recycled, plus batteries and low energy lightbulbs.

TOWN CENTRE MANAGER

Welcome to our new Town Centre Manager, Tina Slater. Sadly she does not devote all her energies to Beckenham, as she also looks after Hayes and Mottingham. But she has made a good start in contacting all the local businesses, asking owners of empty shops to have them tidied up, organising the late summer fair, arranging the event of the switch on of the Christmas Lights along with Copers Cope Residents' Association and the Beckenham Business Association.

DAVID BOWIE IN BECKENHAM

WBRA member Cliff Watkins was on BBC TV on 31st August 2012 filmed in front of the Bowie Plaque on the Three Tuns Building in Beckenham High Street. Cliff described how Bowie had launched his career in his Beckenham Years when he transformed himself from a blonde curly fledgling rock star into the legendary red haired Ziggy Stardust.

In 1969 in his first Beckenham home, a flat in Foxgrove Road, he met Mary Finnigan and together they set up an Art Lab in the back room of the Three Tuns pub. Like David, many other Arts Lab performers and enthusiasts were to become established figures in their chosen careers, like Mick Ronson and Steve Harley (rock stars), George Underwood and Christina Ostrom (artists), David Bebbington (photographer) and Mary who became a journalist.

In August 1969 members of the Arts Lab staged the famous Free Festival which attracted hundreds to Croydon Road

Rec where the iconic photo of the young Bowie performing on the Band Stand was taken. Later that year, Bowie released a single called *Memory of a Free Festival*. This began with the words:

***The Children of the summer's end
Gathered in the dampened grass
We played our songs and felt the
London sky
Resting on our hands
It was God's land
It was ragged and naïve
It was Heaven***

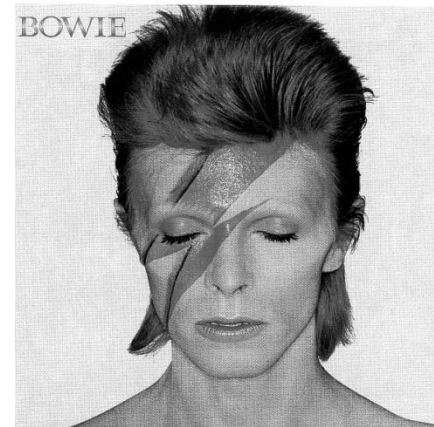
Barbecuing sausages on a wheelbarrow for the crowd was 19 year old Angie Barnett who married Bowie a year later and they moved into an Edwardian Gothic mansion called Haddon Hall almost at the top of Southend Road, backing onto Beckenham Place Park. There they were joined by members of his now famous rock group like Tony Visconti and Mick Ronson, and his manager Tony Defries and others from the music industry's recording and promotion businesses. David held court in Haddon Hall for four marvellous years.

Mega hit albums created during David's Beckenham Years were *Space Oddity* and *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. Ziggy's red cockade hairstyle was created by hair stylist Suzi Fussey, who worked in one of the Evelyn Paget hair salons in Beckenham. Suzi became David's and the group's full-time hairdresser and wardrobe assistant on the Ziggy Stardust tours.

Two years after the Free Festival, Bowie re-visited Croydon Road Rec and sat on the steps of the bandstand to write the lyrics for *Life on Mars*. The music was embellished by Rick Wakeman (piano part) and Mick Ronson (guitar), and was used in 2006 for the very successful

BBC retro thriller series of the same name, starring Philip Glenister

Cliff
Watkins



Bowie as Ziggy Stardust 1972
with Susie Fussey's hair style

You can find more details of famous local people and places on our website.

<http://www.westbeckenhamra.org/about-us/beckenham-and-penge-famous-people-and-places/>

TONY GOODCHILD – An artistic journey

During the 1980s, *The Review* was produced in a smaller format and was edited by Hazel Leonard, who is still a member. The front cover used to carry a pen sketch of a local view or building by the noted local artist Tony Goodchild. He produced these pictures for about five years. He found they were very easy to draw, and he often gave them away.

He has sketched and painted in water colours many churches all over the country, where they are often used in making notelets for the church to sell to raise funds.

Tony has lived in West Wickham since 1961, but he was originally an Elmers End boy. He went to Marian Vian School until he was 15, and then for two years at Beckenham School of Art, which was

next to Beckenham Library until it was destroyed by an arsonist. He then worked for a company off Fleet Street which produced art work for many different publications. After National Service in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps he was in advertising until made redundant. An opening was offered to him as artist in residence at Grove Park Hospital, where he enjoyed teaching Art, Calligraphy and Woodwork.

And this is a drawing specially commissioned by WBRA of Beckenham Cottage Hospital. Many thanks to Tony, who is now 80 and still painting, especially historic buildings all over Europe while on holiday with his wife, Barbara. He has been a member of West Wickham Art Club for 50 years, and is also a member of Beckenham and Bromley National Trust, producing front cover illustrations of historic buildings for the Trust Newsletter.

Alan Freeman

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Beckenham Christmas lights will be switched on on 17th November between 3pm and 6 pm. It is planned to have a walk starting at the newly refurbished *Ye Olde George* pub to St George's Church where there will be carol singing. The walk will be accompanied by music and dancing.

AROUND AND ABOUT

ALDI Store

The Aldi shop on the site of the old Robin Hood public house on Croydon Road is now open. By the number of customers who use it, it appears to be very popular. A recent survey has shown that a shopping basket of goods from Aldi is cheaper than any other supermarket. (We should add that WBRA has no links with Aldi !)

Litter bins

Residents living around the Avenue Road tram stop have been having trouble with litter in the vicinity. A story was carried in the *News Shopper* free newspaper in May 2012. Although there are bins on the up and down tram platforms, litter and other detritus proliferates. Through the good offices of Bob Edwards of Bromley Council, large



This is one of Tony's designs for the front cover of *The Review* for 1983.



bins are now in place on the pavement each side of the foot bridge. This is as a result of pressure from WBRA.

Police

WBRA members regularly attend Safer Neighbourhood groups around our area. Now that the Olympics and Paralympics are over, our local police teams should be up to strength again. There has been an upsurge in burglary figures, but the teams have had successes in arresting a number of culprits.

Libraries

At a meeting at Croydon Town Hall on 5th October it was stated that 5% of the users of the Upper Norwood Joint Library were from the borough of Bromley. If the Anerley library were to be closed by Bromley and the numbers of users of the UNJL from the Bromley area were to increase, a charge would be imposed on Bromley by Croydon and Lambeth Councils.

Petrol Station

Rumour has it that Shell has taken over the petrol station opposite Mackenzie Road, Clock House. It is at the moment being refurbished. Meanwhile the empty shops under the block of flats on the corner of Sidney Road and Beckenham Road, also in Clock House, are being turned into flats.

Last posting dates for Christmas this year

Second Class – 18th December
First Class – 20th December
Special Delivery – 22nd December

Alan Freeman

**FRIENDS OF BECKENHAM PLACE
PARK**

The newsletter of the Friends contains this seasonal item:

Autumn Leaves and Woodland Management

This time of year nature does its bit for recycling by depositing a thick covering of discarded leaves over everything. Leaves will naturally rot down under the trees to return some nutrients to the ground. Leaves can help gardeners too if collected up and stored, plastic sacks will do, next year there will be some lovely free leaf-mould to spread around the garden. The leaves need to be damp when put into the sacks or add water if they are dry. Leaves give the last bright, visual display before the bare skeletons of the trees stand, along with us, waiting for the winter to turn into spring. Even our modest park and local street trees boast a riot of yellows, browns, rusts and reds. Our park has a predominance of oaks and ashes, and sycamores are maturing well in some places. Broadleaf trees (oak, ash, lime etc.) generally come into leaf after bluebells and wood anemone have flowered. We have found that without a canopy of broadleaf trees ground cover like bramble and ivy can overwhelm bluebells. This leads on to evergreen species which we attempt to control in the park e.g. Holly which will spread by layering and again overwhelm anything else. The holly we have previously cut down quickly composts and rots down when left in 'habitat piles' which are home to bank voles and invertebrates. These little autumn and winter jobs help to produce next year's fresh leaves and flowers.

NB The Friends organise workdays on the second Saturday of each month, and there is a Silent Walk on Saturday 24th November at 10.00. Meet on the Mansion steps.

