



October 2014 Edition

The Review

**You are invited to the
JOINT WEST BECKENHAM AND COPERS
COPE AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS
FORUM
to be held on Wednesday 15th October 2014
at 8.00pm at Beckenham Public Halls**

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION – *by Judith Niechcial*

Welcome to this Autumn edition of *The Review*. The headline article this issue is the very disappointing result of our efforts to have Elmers End Green registered as a Town Green. Marie Pender, our Chair, has worked unstintingly to try to achieve this registration, and it is very upsetting that her efforts, and those of our members, have come to nought.

The forum on 15th October will feature councillors from all the wards of the WBRA and CCARA areas. This is your chance to hear from them and question them on matters that are important to you.

ELMERS END GREEN

WBRA are very disappointed that the Council's Executive Committee has rejected the opportunity to register Elmers End Green as a Town or Village Green.

As you know, the Development Control Committee had recognised the value of the Green's history and how much local people love it. They felt registration would show the Borough in its best "Clean and Green" form and were enthusiastic for registration. This was a breath of fresh air. Here was a committee, under the chairmanship of Councillor Peter Dean, who actually listened to what we were saying! It recommended that the Executive Committee register the Green as "easiest" way forward.

On 10 September, Cllr. Alan Collins (Kelsey and Eden Park) gave a spirited and eloquent exposition of the case in favour to the Executive Committee, which, nevertheless, dismissed the Development Control Committee's recommendation for registration. Instead these seven middle aged "men in suits" just found reasons to do nothing and seemed to ridicule the value of the Green to its local people.

WBRA cannot see what the council possibly had to lose by registration. We weren't asking them to spend thousands – registration would be a simple administrative act costing virtually nothing. If a piece of land that has been an undeveloped and open space used by residents of the small Elmers End hamlet from circa 1723 right up to the present day doesn't qualify as a town green, we don't know what does. The Green is used regularly for walking, with or without dogs, and there have even been sightings of a couple of lads knocking a football against the toilet building.

Thank you so much to those who wrote in to the council. We estimate

about 50 individual emails and letters were sent, which is a really good response. All our local councillors supported registration. The Beckenham Society, Bromley Local History Society, Copers Cope Area Residents' Association and Elmers End Free Church also wrote to support us. It is very depressing when our elected representatives show such little regard for the opinions and wishes of the electorate.

The sale of the toilet block on the green was completed in April, to a Mr. G Smith of Keston. His firm is described as a specialist builder. The price shown in the Land Registry is £43,250. No planning application has yet been made for change of use or any other changes to the building.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ELMERS END GREEN



Elmers End, as a district, was first recorded in the reign of Henry III (1216-1272) as land owned by Ralph Aylmer. Researching our local records in Beckenham Library, we find Elmers End Green itself, in exactly the same shape and location in 1723 – 300 years ago, and it has continued to be shown in all maps ever since. In 1919, the Beckenham Local Board purchased the land to the west of the Green for the housing estate, Marion Vian School and allotments, all for our returning war heroes. In 1924, the Green was fenced

with iron railings and made into a children's play area, and in 1926 seats and a sand heap were provided. In 1934 the one way traffic system was formalised, making Elmerside Road part of the junction for the first time, and Beckenham's first dropped kerb crossings "for perambulators" were trialled at the Green. In 1936, the new Beckenham Borough Council built the toilets on the Green, partly sunken and screened by shrubs. The railings were taken for the war effort in 1941. The Borough Council re-built the toilets above ground in 1962. In 1998, the Elmers End Residents' Association and LB Bromley funded the village sign.



BECKENHAM CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND MARKET - 29 NOVEMBER

There will once again be a Candlelit Parade. The Christmas Light Switch On event will take place on Beckenham Green. There will be live entertainment, a big festive singsong, a funfair, and some hot food and mulled drinks. If we are lucky it might just snow.

More details will follow. See notice boards or our website, www.westbeckenhamra.org

PLANNING

Rising Sun pub, Upper Elmers End Road



The application to demolish the pub and replace it with flats and a supermarket has been recommended for refusal by officials, on the grounds that the pub should be kept! This seems to be a reversal of the council's refusal of WBRA's application to list the Rising Sun as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) last year. The officers' report says this is "in the light of changing understanding articulated in the London Plan [...] of the contribution of pubs to social infrastructure". It also says that the Viability Report and Business Study fails to demonstrate that the business is no longer financially viable as a public house. Given that Camra collected over 300 signatures from customers for the ACV application, it seems to us that this was obvious from the start. On the planning application itself, the design of the building has been changed from a white monolith to a more brick like finish with a staggered facade. And it turns out that the supermarket in the application was a move of the Co-op on the opposite side of the street. Meanwhile the council has refused permission for the car wash in the car park to continue operating while the pub is closed – it was supposed to be for customers only. Bromley Camra are intending to make a new application for ACV listing.

Meanwhile we do hope that the planning committee will follow the advice of their officers and refuse permission for the flats, and allow the Rising Sun to rise again!

We are also pleased to report that the appeal against the ACV listing of the William IV in Elmers End Green was not upheld.

213 Kings Hall Road

This application for the erection of 6 houses (3 pairs of semi-detached) with an access road, at the rear of 213 Kings Hall Road has been refused on the grounds of restricted plot size and overdevelopment of the site and fumes, noise and disturbance of traffic affecting the amenities of neighbours. An appeal has been lodged.

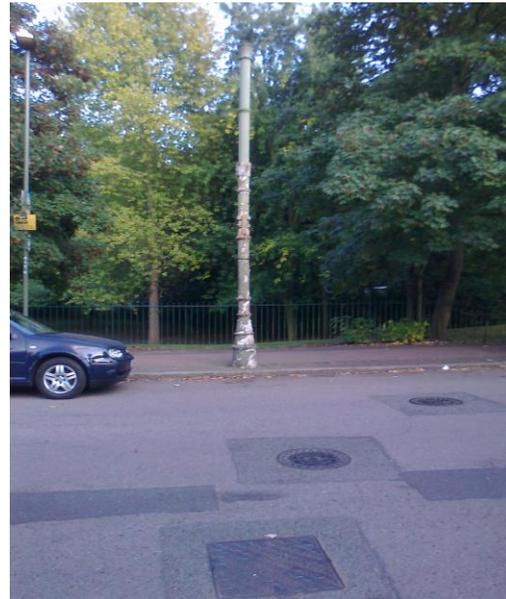
Pheonix House, Croydon Road Beckenham

WBRA had objected to the demolition of one of the few remaining Victorian buildings along Croydon Road. Pheonix House was formerly a maternity home. We asked that it be converted to flats instead. However, the officers' report recommends permission on the grounds that residential use is acceptable in this location, and a redesign has meant it will have undue dominance on the street scene.

SEWER VENTS

If there are any sewer vents in bad condition near you let us know and we will pass the information onto Thames Water. These are tall posts that look like Victorian lamp posts without the lamps, like this one on Manor Way outside Kelsey Park at the junction of Greenways. Sewer vents were used by the Victorians to – you guessed it – vent the sewers. They are not needed on modern sewers, but several old sewers

have been left standing without any maintenance for many years.



We think Thames Water don't actually know where they are – so let's tell them! A couple of years ago, Vanessa Allen gathered some information on some vents and Thames Water acted promptly to re-paint them.

Email info@westbeckenhamra.org or drop a line to the Chair – address at the end.

BECKENHAM TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS

Since we last reported there has been a lot of work behind the scenes, though not a lot can be seen on the ground. The Beckenham Junction improvements have been delayed because BT have to realign their service ducts. They were first asked in January, but still have done nothing - sound familiar for BT? Money that was put aside for "short term improvements", such as mending the various clocks, restoring the water tap at Kelsey Square, and general de-cluttering, has been subsumed into the general TfL matching funding budget.

Instead we have just a small pot of money from a planning agreement. We are looking at options for this money including a permanent cover for the stage on Beckenham Green, which will allow much wider usage than the popular markets, e.g. open air concerts. Meanwhile surveys are going on in and around the High Street to "model" the effect on traffic and pedestrians of various proposed changes to pavements and junctions. Then the detailed plans can be made. WBRA and CCARA have accompanied officials and Cllr Ian Dodd to site visits in Richmond, Twickenham and Sydenham to see how these towns have spent their TfL money and bring back ideas.

As part of the Town Centre Improvements, there is a consultation on a proposal to extend the conservation areas in the centre of Beckenham. The proposed new area is large, taking in many side streets. But it may be good to have the whole of the High Street in one conservation area. Even though some post war buildings don't currently have much to conserve, if they come up for re-development we will have much greater say in the new buildings' design if they are included in a conservation area.

See the consultation and make your response at http://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/200079/regeneration/981/beckenham_town_centre_improvements/3

CROYDON ROAD RECREATION GROUND BANDSTAND RESTORATION

On 16 August, there was a memorial concert in the bandstand at the Croydon Road Recreation Ground to mark exactly 45 years to the day that David Bowie gave his free concert.



More than 1,000 people enjoyed a fabulous atmosphere, live music, food, drinks and a craft fair. The restoration of the park's iconic Victorian bandstand will cost in excess of £120,000. Bromley council will be putting in a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in October, but proceeds of more than £7,000 from the concert will help set up the local contribution. If all goes to plan, the bandstand could be open for business by June 2015 for a season of summer events.

As part of the fund raising activities, the council are inviting people to buy "a brick" in a circular pavement around the bandstand. The wording on the brick can commemorate a loved one, mark a special occasion, promote a business or just record your family name as a supporter. They cost £100 each. WBRA will buy one and donate £100 to the cause. The pathway will be installed in the summer of 2015, if the Heritage Lottery Fund bid is successful. There will also be a celebratory evening in the bandstand, again part of the fundraising efforts. Live music, dance, bubbles and canapes served around the newly restored bandstand. Tickets cost £35 each or £60 for two.

Find out more at the Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground website. <http://www.becrec.net/>

BETHLEM HOSPITAL GALLERY

The Archives and Museum at Bethlem Royal Hospital will be moving to new premises on the hospital site towards the end of 2014, together with the Bethlem Gallery.

The organisers hope that the new museum and gallery will be a resource for the local community, and look forward to arranging a private preview for members of the Residents' Association early in 2015.

You can find out more at:

www.bethlemmuseumofthemind.org/.

BROMLEY CRIME SUMMIT

By the time you read this the Bromley Safer Neighbourhood Board Public Meeting will have taken place at Bromley Civic Centre. It was on Saturday 27 September 2014. Amongst other things there was a seminar on domestic violence and a presentation about London-wide crime statistics. We do not yet know whether this will become a regular event. The new Borough Commander is Chris Hafford.

THE STUDIO

Council officials made an inspection of this property on 17 September, and met Citygate's representatives, Pastor Julian Melfi and Alan Samways.

They report that work on the refurbishment recommenced in August and at the time of the visit three workers were on site, who were primarily engaged in decorating the exterior and cleaning the stonework. A cherry picker was also on site to enable access and avoid the use of scaffolding. Significant repairs to the window joinery have been undertaken. When the external works are complete, Citygate is intending to clear the site and remove the hoarding.

With regard to the internal works, the position is largely similar to that reported to Full Council on 21 July. Works are substantially complete and to a good standard, and the main outstanding works include finishing the toilets and showers, floor coverings, installing the new boilers, reception desk area and various fixtures and fittings.

It was explained that there have been some funding issues, but the council were given assurances that there is now sufficient funding available to complete the project (that is with the exception of the external lift shaft and lift, which is not part of the contractual refurbishment works, and which will follow when further funding is available).

Citygate was questioned about its anticipated completion / reopening date. Whilst there was a reluctance to commit to a particular date, we were told that this would certainly be no later than Easter 2015. The possibility of a partial reopening excluding access to the basement area (except for the new WCs) was discussed and Citygate is going to consider this. Citygate reported that to date the works had cost in excess of £500,000.

It is good to have an update, but very disappointing that the opening of the building has been subject to so many delays.

BECKENHAM WAR MEMORIAL

In 1918, weary of futile, senseless slaughter, the world signed a treaty of "peace". Beckenham's part in the war can be estimated by the fact that 835 soldiers were treated in Christ Church Hospital.

Upon returning home soldiers would have been forced quickly back into work to support their families, some factories would have closed at the start of the war never to re-open, these men would certainly have struggled. As many as

711 did not return and a far greater number returned injured, both mentally and physically and were burdened with those scars for the duration of their life.



In 1919 Beckenham realised at once the suitability and moral necessity of a memorial in the High Street to those who had fallen. Every November on remembrance day there is a Memorial service, the returnees and their families would have attended to reflect on the horror that was WW1, their lives would never be the same again.

There were 711 names inscribed on 12 tablets when the Beckenham memorial was unveiled by Sgt B Hanscombe DCM, MM on 24 July 1921. All the 711 names were from WWI. Over 300 forces names were added in 1950 from WWII with 288 civilians including 22 children, 30 AFS and 12 Civil Defence.

(With thanks to the website www.beckenhamhistory.co.uk. Ed.)

RECIPE FOR BOBOTIE *from our resident cook, Eileen Penfold*

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 onions, peeled and sliced
- 2 pounds lean minced beef
- 2 slices thick white bread
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon medium curry powder (I usually use less!!)
- 1½ tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1½ teaspoons ground pepper
- 1½ tablespoons vinegar
- ¾ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ cup raisins
- 2 tablespoons chutney (I use sweet mango)
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 medium eggs

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Pre-heat oven to 180°C
- Heat oil in medium pan, stir in onions. Cook over medium heat until transparent. Add minced beef and cook until light brown and crumbly.
- Soak bread in the milk – squeeze out excess milk and mash bread with a fork. Set aside the excess milk.
- Add curry, sugar, salt, pepper, mashed bread, turmeric, vinegar, raisins and chutney to the beef. Spoon into a greased baking dish. Place bay leaves on top. Bake for 50 - 60 minutes. Beat egg with the milk and pour over the mixture approx 25 – 30 minutes before end of baking time.
- Serve with rice and vegetables of choice and chutney. Dish also freezes well.

