



50th Year 1967-2017

President: Charles Mynors

www.ealingcivicsociety.org



50th Anniversary Issue – July 2017

From Our Chairman

This issue celebrates a historic landmark for Ealing Civic Society -- our Golden anniversary. In our previous two issues, Paul Fitzmaurice has given us an account of the Society's evolution since the early days, but at the time of writing in 2007 there were some significant gaps in our knowledge, particularly about ECS's formation and where the idea came from. Subsequently, one of the founder members, the late Margaret Bailey, got in touch to tell us that the initiative to form the Society came from her and Neil Martin-Kaye, who between them decided

that a new amenity group was needed for E a l i n g . Challenges were expected to arise from proposals for local government reorganisation about that time, which affected London in particular. Also there was an imminent threat to Ealing from the then Greater L o n d o n

with the plans for redevelopment of the town centre. The fledgling society was faced with the enormous challenge of defeating – which it and other nearby residents groups did successfully – both the Council and powerful developers over a bypass scheme and a concrete monstrosity proposed for the centre of Ealing where Ealing Broadway Centre is today.

It is interesting to see how many of the threats are just as real today, not least from the proposals for redevelopment of the town centre and its surrounding land. Development pressures are probably even greater now than they were in the 1960s, particularly given the coming of Crossrail in 2019 which has been pushing up the value of development land in the Uxbridge Road corridor. Ten years ago we were discussing plans for Dickens Yard hoping that these would result in a sympathetic development behind the Town Hall on what was otherwise a car park wasteland (with a nasty 1970s council office block in the middle). Unfortunately, the resulting development has been disappointing, not least because the Council administration that gave planning consent

pressurised the developer, St George, into providing more parking spaces in the basement which resulted in increasing the height of some of the blocks to



Bond Street looking north

compensate for the extra cost. The development, which is due to be completed in 2019, is looming above the Town Hall and surrounding residential areas and the architecture is not very sympathetic to that of Ealing, despite our best efforts to persuade St George to change

EALING CIVIC SOCIETY

Paul Bedwell

Trustee, Civic Voice

50 years of Conservation Areas

2017 marks the 50th Anniversary of both the Ealing Civic Society and the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Come and find out about the background to the Act, its implementation, and how conservation areas have worked in practice since 1967.



Tuesday 11 July 2017

7.30pm

Nelson Room, Ealing Town Hall
New Broadway, W5 2BY

All are welcome to attend this free talk

www.ealingcivicsociety.org

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Council's plan to create "a new metropolitan centre" to compete with Kingston and Uxbridge.

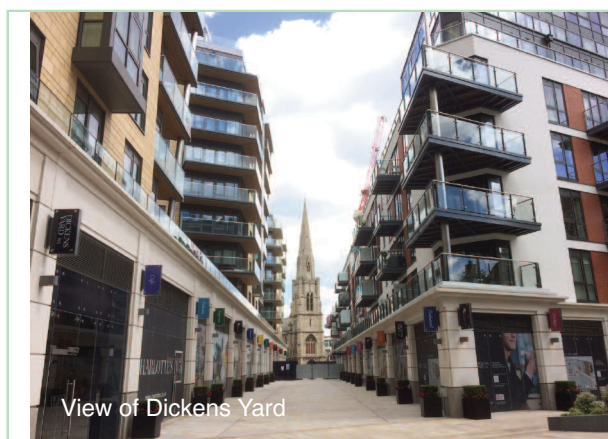
Using guidance provided by the Civic Trust (which had been formed 10 years earlier – its successor is Civic Voice) Margaret and Neil convened a public meeting in Ealing Town Hall on 2 October 1967 with a view to drawing up a programme of events for the new society. The true nature of the threat came to light shortly after

Coming events

Tuesday 11th July: Special 50th Anniversary Lecture, Nelson Room, Ealing Town Hall, at 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Paul Bedwell, Civic Voice, "Fifty Years of Conservation Areas."

Thursday 12th October: Anniversary Buffet Lunch: details to follow

Thursday 9th November: ECS Award Ceremony Haven Green Baptist Church Hall at 7.30 p.m.



View of Dickens Yard

some of their proposals.

We have also had the saga of the cinema site which has been ongoing since around 2004 when the first planning consent was given for redevelopment of the old Forum Cinema in the Uxbridge Road. Unfortunately, a forced change of ownership as a result of the takeover of UGC cinemas meant that the building fell into the hands of Empire Cinemas who came up with grandiose plans for a 16-screen redevelopment which were scuppered by the recession in 2008/9. The old former Forum cinema – save the facade – was sadly needlessly demolished but the site remained in limbo, which resulted in the Council undertaking CPO action, together with their development partner Land Securities, to wrest control from Empire Cinemas. The CPO was eventually successful in 2015 and Land Securities gained planning consent for their scheme which entailed an eight-screen cinema behind Bond Street, some cafes, a small square and a large number of flats. Unfortunately, the cinema facade would front a large organic retail store with flats above rather than the screens themselves. Like many sites in Ealing, the land was sold on by Land Securities to St George, the owners of the Dickens Yard site, last year. They recently held an exhibition about their revisions to



Arcadian vision

the original scheme: there is more on this in a later article. And so we come to the latest planning application for part of the Arcadia site: 10 years ago we were faced with the prospect of a large redevelopment of the whole site by an Irish developer called Glenkerrin. They came in with grandiose plans for rafting over the railway tracks and a 40-storey tower. This was later reduced to 24 storeys but the whole development was an eyesore and would have completely obliterated a large block of central Ealing, replacing it with modern buildings even more out of keeping than the Dickens Yard development. The Council

of course gave Glenkerrin planning consent but with Save Ealing's Centre, which we helped create, we managed to get the application called in and eventually defeated at the subsequent public inquiry in 2009. Benson Elliot later acquired the site for around £40m after Glenkerrin went bust. They redeveloped the old Waterglade/Arcadia centre (now called 1-8 The Broadway) and set about ambitious plans for redevelopment of the rest of the site (now called 9-42 The Broadway). Unfortunately, despite initially having good intentions for the site their architects came up with the scheme which was not sympathetic with the architecture of the rest of Ealing and, worst of all, proposed an 18-storey tower block which overlooked Haven Green and sweeping away most of the existing buildings on the site. After late pressure from Historic England to save some of the facades the proposals were slightly modified but important buildings like 35 The Broadway (the Carphone Warehouse building) would still be lost. The Council again gave consent for the scheme despite strong objections from not only ourselves but also national heritage groups, in particular Historic England, and once again we had to fight for a public inquiry. Almost uniquely, the application was called in again by the Secretary of State for determination at a public inquiry. We were expecting to have to devote three weeks of our lives to the inquiry in May but shortly after 5 PM on the Friday before the week of the inquiry I was rung by our barrister, Charles Streeten, to say that the inquiry had been cancelled. This was after SEC had managed to raise almost £30,000 to pay for our barrister, expert witnesses and untold hours of members' voluntary time had been spent on the case since it was called in in May 2016. I think we were all absolutely astonished because it was so unexpected!

But we shouldn't forget the development pressures elsewhere in the Borough partly but not only as a result of Crossrail. In particular, since our 40th anniversary in 2007 20+ storey student accommodation block towers have sprung up at North Acton which have no relationship to the area whatsoever and worse is to come with 40+ storeys threatened in other schemes nearby. Even worse, huge development involving a very large group of high blocks has recently received consent on the old Glaxo/Hovis site at Greenford Green. We and local resident groups have asked the Secretary of State to call the application in but the chances of success are not great. There are many other examples of smaller but just as unsuitable developments around the Borough where we have been fighting on a number of fronts but we have not always been successful. The need for a strong Civic Society has never been greater and we look forward to receiving your continued support in the coming years.

Robert Gurd

John Delafons Lecture

Transforming Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery

Pitzhanger Manor is one of Ealing's few Grade I listed buildings and as such has been the focus of the Civic Society's gaze for many years. Its preservation was the subject of this year's anniversary John Delafons Lecture, given by Georgina Nayler, Vice Chair of the Pitzhanger Manor Trust, on May 23rd at the Town Hall. Eighty-five members and interested parties attended, to be brought up to date on the current restoration. As Georgina reminded us, the aim of the work is to restore the fabric to the state it was in 1810 when Sir John Soane, its architect owner sold his 'country estate'. Restoration is moving ahead on time and other things being equal it will be complete in June 2018.

One of Georgina Nayler's revelations concerned the removal of the infill between the House and the Gallery. When it was removed, the Gallery listed over on its

doggy foundations – the infill had been doing double duty by propping up the Gallery. Now the foundations had to be reinforced at some expense. Another gem that touched on John



Soane's not entirely savoury reputation was hinted at in two pictures made by JMW Turner of guests at a dining table in the old Eating Room. The second of these was an impressionist account of the guests lurching about after the dinner had been under way for some time. The Eating Room also housed The Rake's Progress before it was moved to Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1810.



Sir John Soane was fond of the idea that his "country villa" was on the site of a Roman villa but there is little evidence of that apart from some broken pieces of masonry. The bronze statue of Minerva dates from a later time.

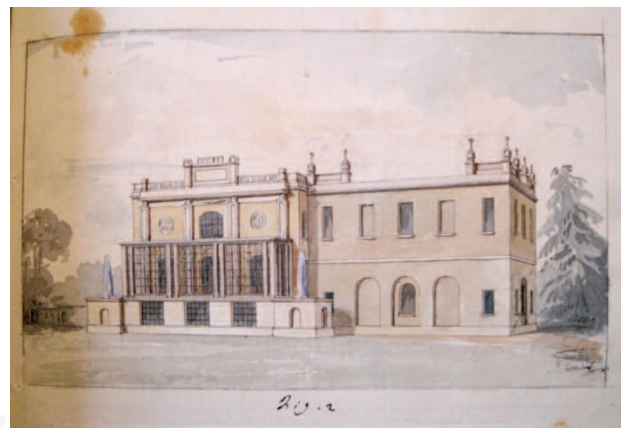
Funding from Ealing Council, The Heritage Lottery Fund, private contributions and 'key donors' is unlikely to meet the full cost, and there is still a

shortfall of £1 million: the drive for funds continues. We were invited to become Founder Benefactors and a leaflet provided thoughtfully suggested donations of £5,000, £10,000, £20,000 or higher.

Georgina Nayler reminded us again that one purpose of the restoration is to step up physical security so that the Gallery will be allowed to stage exhibitions comprising works borrowed from other galleries and museums, including perhaps some Soane originals. Local art groups will be displaying work in the community galleries in the House, and the large Gallery will be devoted to major exhibitions.



Visualisation of Manor 2019



Questions from the floor included:

Q: The use of the Eating Room for private functions has been diminished now that half the Eating Room has been removed. How will this be made good?

A: more space will be made available from other parts of the house.

Q: Why was the original Conservatory demolished?

A: maintenance costs were too high, and those costs will have to be factored in to the replacement conservatory. There is also a danger from stone-throwing vandals.

Drawing to a close, Robert Gurd reminded us that if the 1960s town centre plans had been allowed to go ahead, the Manor would now be nestling up to a six-lane highway forging down Mattock Lane – fighting which was one of the reasons for the Civic Society's coming into existence.

Tony Williams

Looking Back over 50 years

In 1965 the newly-formed Greater London Council designated Ealing as one of six Metropolitan Centres around London to be "second only to the West End in terms of shopping, leisure, employment, entertainment, cultural and other activities". A public meeting in the Victoria Hall (as crowded as the tram meetings of later times) howled down the proposals. Who wanted another Croydon here?

Unfortunately the Council did, reckoning it would bring wealth, prosperity and status to Ealing. To provide the requisite number of shops to warrant metropolitan recognition, Ealing and West Ealing had to be counted as one, and somehow these two totally different shopping centres, over a mile apart, had to be linked. In the heady 1960s, why not build a new dual carriageway road stretching all the way from the Common to the end of West Ealing, with five roundabouts and an overpass over the Uxbridge Road, destroying around 1000 dwellings to do so?

Ealing Civic Society was the first major group to oppose the road as well as challenging the whole metropolitan concept. Soon ECS's clever members began to devise an alternative to the potentially destructive road, and suggested what was to be called the Spine Route – linking the Broadway and West Ealing via a new road alongside the railway tracks. This idea was eventually scuppered by the Council allowing development along the proposed route.

I joined the Society around this time and over 50 years close and lasting friendships were made, urban issues were learned and absorbed, hard work was rewarded with highly successful campaigns, and ECS became an integral part of my life.

We've seen people come and go – never in a huff but because they moved or passed away. We've had Robert Gurd as our Chairman for more years than he would have wanted and he has skilfully steered us through turbulent times: the cinema loss, the Glenkerrin refusal, Conservation issues, Dickens Yard, and recently the 9-42 The Broadway withdrawal.

We've seen the reputation of the Society soar with changing political and executive administrations: we knew far more of the history and background of Ealing than anyone in the Town Hall - and still do. We started as a protest group against inappropriate and unwelcome changes to our town and developed into a positive force for conservation and sensitive development. Now an active and concerned membership is needed for the Society to continue its work and hopefully this anniversary year will encourage you to take over the mantle of those of us who have given so many years to Ealing Civic Society. Take your opportunity now actively to create a town that you rather than developers want and let us co-opt you onto one of the Society's committees. Do please volunteer to join one of our

committees in taking our Society forward to meet the doubtless challenges lying ahead.

Corinne Templer, Honorary Vice-President

Rowland 'Chick' Anthony (1929-2017)

Way back in the mists of the 1970s and 1980s, Joy and Chick Anthony were forces to be reckoned with. Chick was Chair of Ealing Civic Society from 1993 to 1997 several years after Michael Barnes' departure. Both these immensely hard-working contributors to our Society have now passed away.



Chick and Joy moved to Jersey a good few years ago. Before his retirement, he had been a Bafta nominated sound engineer for the BBC, especially renowned for his work on prestigious dramas.

In Jersey he chaired the Soci  t  , a kind of arts and history civic society, which was also responsible for the Battle of Flowers.

Joy was a one-time press secretary for ECS and played a significant role in the 1970s development of Ealing Broadway Centre. She became a magistrate but sadly her health declined and her talents were gravely underused. Chick was her sole, uncomplaining carer for very many years until his sudden death last month. Joy is now in a Jersey Nursing Home.

They were stalwart pioneers of the early Society, probably remembered by many of our members.

Our condolences go to their son, Simon, in Australia and their daughter, Biddy, in Buckinghamshire.

Corinne Templer

Ed. You can listen to a full tribute paid to Chick Anthony on BBC Radio Jersey: <http://bit.ly/2sqRAY0>

Civic Society Awards deadline for entries

The deadline for entries is 30th September and the Award ceremony is on 9th November 2017. The project must be located within the London Borough of Ealing. Awards are made for schemes that enhance the environment by good design, landscaping, or service to the community of other kinds. They may include new buildings or those which have been substantially restored or refurbished, landscaping or townscape projects. See the ECS website for details of the scheme and an application form.

In the Footsteps of Sir John Soane

Sir John Soane was known to enjoy walking from his town house in Lincoln's Inn Fields (today's Sir John Soane's Museum) to his country house, Pitzhanger Manor. The distance between the two houses is 8.7 miles. There were carriages, of course, but even successful men like John Soane, John Quincy Adams and William Hogarth often chose to take a bracing walk between town and country, or vice-versa. Soane bought Pitzhanger in 1800, re-built it until 1804, then sold it in 1810. Below is an 1800 map showing the Oxford Street - Bayswater Road – Uxbridge Road axis as a major westerly trunk road then as today.



Thanks to Mike Paterson's blog (he is director of the London Historians, see website below), we know that the long walk is quite feasible and is very enjoyable exercise if you can tolerate some traffic pollution along the way. Mike and the London Historians completed the "Footsteps of Soane" walk to see Pitzhanger Manor on 28th March

2015, which was the final day of public opening before the Manor was closed for restoration. This restoration was the subject of our John Lafons lecture given by Georgina Nayler (see p.3).

We are keen to re-enact the "In the Footsteps of Soane" walk this anniversary year so do let us know if you are interested in joining us for this odyssey by emailing info@ealingcivicsociety.org. Our destination is Sir John Soane's Museum where we will see how the "Opening up the Soane" project has transformed the museum. Of course, we will stop for refreshments both during the walk and at the end of the walk in Lincoln's Inn Fields. We will also note the interesting buildings along the route which are so often missed because you are in traffic. Step back in time with Ealing Civic Society and get a sense of what life was like before trains and buses.

London Historians: <http://bit.ly/2sB9W72>

Josette Bishop

From our Treasurer

If you pay your subscription by cash or cheque, it helps if you pay as early in the year as possible. This will save you from receiving reminders from the Treasurer. The amount due for the year is £12.00.

You may make the payment by **online bank transfer**. Our bank account details are

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Mrs Josette Bishop

Treasurer, Ealing Civic Society

8 Castlebar Hill

Ealing W5 1TD

email: josettebishop@btinternet.com

Members who pay by **standing order** pay £2.00 less, i.e. £10.00. Please download the form from our website if you would prefer to set up a standing order and post the completed and signed form to Josette.

Eric Ravilious

Acton History Group are organising a trip to an exhibition devoted to the work of Eric Ravilious and some of his contemporaries at **The Towner Gallery** in Eastbourne. Civic Society members are welcome to join.



The Towner Gallery holds one of the largest public collections of works by the Sussex artist Eric Ravilious (1903-1942) who was born in Churchfield Road, W3. Its Ravilious Room is a space dedicated to a selection of his finest watercolours, prints and ceramics and those of some of his contemporaries. Explore its comprehensive archive and browse books on the artist. The visit is planned for Saturday, 5 August 2017.

Exhibition Prices: £8.00 Concessions £7.00

Art Fund members £4.00

For further information and tips about timing and how to get to the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne contact: David Bays, bayscolledge@talktalk.net

Space, Grace, Sense of Place

This was the name of the first ever issue of the Ealing Civic Society newsletter, published in the autumn of 1968. It was a small publication consisting of eight sides of A5 paper which appears to have been produced on a duplicator. It was billed as the first issue of what was hoped to be a regular quarterly publication by the Society. Its aims were to keep members informed of the Society's plans and activities and publish items of news and articles of general interest. Apart from a list of officers of the Society (chaired by Father Bernard Orchard from Ealing Abbey) the committee members included Arnold Aarons (see panel on p.8) who still lives in Ealing today. Other articles included a piece on the work of the "Redevelopment Committee" which was considering the future of Ealing Town Centre – very much a live subject at the time. The group was set up in order to develop an alternative scheme to the Council's own town centre study containing proposals which horrified members of the Society, in particular to drive a six-lane highway through the centre of Ealing. The other main article was about conservation areas which is reproduced below in full.

Conservation Areas

Under Part I of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, local authorities were empowered to designate as conservation areas localities of architectural or historical interest. The Planning Committee of Ealing Council has proposed that seven areas within the Borough be so designated. They are:

1. The Brentham Garden Estate, built mainly between 1901 and 1913 as a tenants' co-partnership.
2. Bedford Park, part of which lies within the London Borough of Hounslow. Built mainly in the 10 years following 1876 under the supervision of Norman Shaw, the estate was the prototype garden suburb.
3. Hanger Hill Garden Estate. Built between 1928 and 1934 in a Tudor half-timbered style.
4. Norwood Green. The conservation area centred on the Green contains the Parish Church of St Mary, dating in part from the 12th century, a number of 18th-century houses and the small village school of the same period.
5. Ealing Village [sic]. Extending from Teulon's St Mary's Church to Soane's Pitzhanger Manor (now the Central Library). The Society is particularly interested in the future of this area under the Council's draft Town Centre Plan.
6. Churchfields, Hanwell, with Brent Lodge Park, St Mary's Church (1841) and a stretch of the River Brent, crossed by Brunel's Wharncliffe Viaduct.
7. Northolt Village and the adjacent Belvue Park. St Mary's parish church, including the area, dates from c1300.

Conservation areas designated in the GLC area to date

include Greenwich, Blackheath, Southgate Green and two areas in the London Borough of Merton.

Robert Gurd

Ealing Cinema site

St George held an exhibition in May giving some more information about how the consented plans for the site which they had inherited from Land Securities would be amended in their own scheme.

The principal changes are as follows:

- removal of commercial floor space on the Mattock Lane and Barnes Pike frontages;
- increasing the heights of most of the blocks by up to around 1 storey;
- increasing the number of residential units from 161 to 209 with a proportionate increase in the number of affordable homes (i.e. 17%).

There are no changes envisaged to the eight screen cinema which is due to be completed by 2019, to the public open space or to the proposed small gallery.



Proposed Mattock Lane frontage

The revised proposals are subject to a section 73 (i.e. minor amendment) planning application which is now open for consultation until September. We have yet to study the changes in detail but we are disappointed that the heights of most of the blocks will be increased and the opportunity has not been taken to change some of the most negative aspects of the original consented scheme, in particular the loss of the YMCA building in Bond Street and the failure to incorporate the former Walpole Picture theatre facade into the development in a more meaningful way than is currently proposed.

You can check out the St George Cinema plans at: <http://bit.ly/2rDbBYt>

Robert Gurd

Ealing Town Centre – 50 Years On

Many of the controversies that Ealing Civic Society has been involved in in its 50-year history have involved Ealing town centre itself. In this article Paul Fitzmaurice looks back at what the Broadway area was like in 1967 and some of the changes that have occurred since.

Ealing Broadway in 1967 would still be recognisable today but there have been many changes since, many of which have altered the whole impression of the place. The first major change any visitor returning after 50 years would notice would be at the station itself. Early in 1967 there had been proposals that the old GWR 'pagoda' style station should be demolished with an office block above it. The intention was that the entrance to the separate District Line train further along Haven Green should be combined into the new station. Villiers House as we now know it set an unfortunate precedent in being the first high rise building within the lower Victorian/Edwardian townscape of the town centre itself. In 1967 reservations were already being expressed as to its height although these seem to have been softened somewhat with the news later in the year that the BBC would be moving into it.

Along the Uxbridge Road traffic would have been much lighter than today. It had only been in 1960 that the old 607 trolley buses with their attendant overhead wires had been replaced by the 207 Routemaster buses.

In 1967 there were two functioning cinemas in the centre, the Walpole cinema in Bond Street and the ABC cinema in New Broadway. Both had been designed by J Stanley Beard and ironically both their facades remain today. The Walpole



was converted from a roller skating rink in 1912 and closed in 1972. After being used as a carpet store and a rehearsal studio it was demolished in 1981 with the Walpole House office block being built in its place. The much grander ABC cinema had opened as the Forum cinema in 1934 and had changed its name in 1961. It then underwent a bewildering number of name changes – Cannon, MGM, Virgin, UGC – before being taken over by Empire cinemas in 2006. Empire proposed a complete overhaul of the site, closing it in 2008 and demolishing all but the façade in 2009.

Meanwhile somewhat out of the mainstream of popular entertainments were two notable institutions, the Questors Theatre in Mattock Lane and the Ealing Club in the Broadway opposite the station. The Questors had occupied an old Catholic tin church since 1933 but in 1964 a new modern theatre had been built on its site to produce a theatre which is still thriving today and boasting to be the largest amateur theatre group in the

UK. Meanwhile Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies had formed the Ealing Club in 1962, one of the first to promote rhythm and blues in the UK and it was to provide the breeding ground for such notable acts as the Rolling Stones, the Who and Rod Stewart.

The western end of the Broadway was dominated by two large department stores opposite each other. On the north side was Bentalls which was a relative newcomer opening in Ealing in 1950 having taken over the



long established Eldred Sayers store. Bentalls moved over to the Broadway Centre when it opened in 1985. The old shop was demolished to make way for the Waterglade (later the Arcadia) Centre shopping mall in 1987, which itself was converted over to its present form



in 2013. Meanwhile Bentalls was taken over by Fenwicks in 2001 who subsequently sold the Ealing premises to the Beales chain of departmental stores. Beales stopped trading

in Ealing in 2007 since when the Broadway Centre shop has been occupied by Primark.

On the southern side was John Sanders which had started on the site way back in 1865 as a drapery store. It wasn't to close until 1990 when Marks and Spencer took over the store which, of course, still remains today. Along the Broadway, immediately to the east of John Sanders, was the Royal Oak public house. Beyond that



there was a patchwork of shops such as Dixons and Russell & Bromley, whilst many others were vacant. Likewise south of John Sanders along the eastern side of the High Street there were many vacant shops interspersed by a Sainsburys and the police station. Behind the Broadway and High Street was a tightly packed network of streets of small terraced houses collectively known as 'the Grove area' – Bakers Lane, Lancaster Road, Charles Street, Wells Place and Oak Street.

There were a couple of community halls and a spiritualist church whilst on the site of St Saviour's church, bombed during the war, there was a car park. The Grove area was subject to planning blight; some of the houses had been demolished and converted to temporary car parks whilst others were empty with



squatters occupying them. Although the future of this prominent site abutting the Broadway had been the subject of debate it was not until the following year in 1968 that real controversy ensued.

This was the year that the Council published proposals for what was effectively a motorway running along the line of the Grove and Mattock Lane before entering an elevated section going over Northfields and West Ealing. Predictably the outcry was immediate and fierce leading to the long running saga of the town centre redevelopment and the eventual building of the Broadway Centre. In the next issue I will look at this and other controversies facing the town centre in the ensuing years along with the changing pattern of shopping in the area.

Paul Fitzmaurice

Fifty Years of Conservation

2017 also marks the 50th anniversary of the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and the establishment of the first conservation area in Stamford, Lincolnshire. To mark the event, Historic England has been working with Civic Voice and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) to build a picture of their members' attitudes towards conservation areas half a century on through two parallel surveys.

The overall picture indicates that conservation areas have been effective at preserving areas of historic and architectural interest. Almost all respondents from both groups felt that conservation areas had been in some way successful at protecting heritage, with nearly half thinking they had been 'very' or 'extremely' successful. Respondents felt that most conservation areas appear to be in a stable condition. Most of them from both groups (roughly half) felt that the appearance and vitality of their known conservation area had not changed significantly in the past three years.

The picture, however, is not all positive and respondents from both groups did identify a number of issues to be confronted in this anniversary year. The controls in conservation areas are not well understood. Only 2% of IHBC and Civic Voice members believed the general public have a good understanding about the extent of additional controls in place with more than

half feeling that the public had little' or 'no' understanding. And of the respondents who did report significant change in their local conservation area in the last three years, more were likely to perceive a deterioration rather than an improvement.

Street clutter, the loss of traditional paving materials, advertisements, a lack of maintenance and loss of historic details were the five most significant concerns identified by both groups. The most frequently mentioned concerns were with doors and windows, signs and advertising, shopfronts and the deteriorating condition of front elevations generally.

To mark the 50th anniversary of both events, we will be hosting a talk by Paul Bedwell, Civic Voice trustee, entitled "50 years of Conservation Areas" on Tuesday, 11 July at 7:30 PM in the Nelson Room, Ealing Town Hall.

Robert Gurd

A Civic Society veteran writes...

In 1966 I joined BDP - Building Design Partnership, who were later to become the designers of Ealing Town Centre - where one of my colleagues was Alan St George, an architect. We became good friends and he persuaded me to become a member of the recently formed Executive Committee of Ealing Civic Society. At that time the Executive were considering with horror an Ealing Council proposal to drive a six-lane highway along the alignment of Uxbridge Road.

The Executive Committee comprised several professionals, two architects and a surveyor and several knowledgeable lay individuals. Alan could see that the addition of a civil engineer could be useful in developing the details of a less environmentally and commercially damaging alternative route for what was known as the "Spine Road".

I do not pretend that I put forward the concept of the alternative route and I believe that it was the brainchild of the late Michael Barnes. However, having been given the brief of developing a route running parallel to and alongside the Western Region Railway, I spent several months considering the practicality of utilising the railway embankments for this purpose.

Unfortunately due to the passage of nearly half a century I am unable to recall the subsequent history of the "Spine Road" but suffice to say that the original proposal was dropped.

Arnold Aarons

Tony Williams (Newsletter Editor) 2 Nicholas Gardens, W5 5HY (8567 6941)

Contributors: Robert Gurd, Arnold Aarons, Josette Bishop, Paul Fitzmaurice, Corinne Templer, Tony Williams.

Photos: *Pitzhanger Manor*, courtesy Pitzhanger Manor Trust; *Mattock Lane frontage*, St George; *Georgina Nayler*, TW; *Visualisation of Manor* courtesy Forbes Massie; *Footsteps of Sir John Soane*, London Historians; *Ealing Town Centre*, PF and Ealing Council; *Chick Anthony* BBC Radio Jersey. Printed by Pollyprint www.pollyprint.co.uk