

The Beaconsfield Society

NEWSLETTER October 2016

Date for your Diary

Annual General Meeting

Friday 4th November 2016 7.00 pm

The Fitzwilliams Centre

The short AGM will be followed immediately by a talk by our Patron The Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP. Details of the Agenda can be found on the final page of this newsletter. Attendance is free for members of the Beaconsfield Society and those on the former BOTRA's contact list.

Refreshments will be served at the end and it is hoped that this first meeting jointly attended by those associated with The Society and those associated with BOTRA will truly launch the merged Societies.

Enjoy an outstanding speaker and a free glass of wine with nibbles!



Chairman's letter

Mike Elliott

We aim to tell you what is going on in our town and the Society's involvement in it. Can I extend a special welcome to BOTRA members who may be reading our newsletter for the first time?

I am pleased to report that the Society is in excellent health following our merger with BOTRA. The proposed joining of the two groups was passed unanimously at respective General Meetings and has been well received by community groups and residents alike. We have been busy in recent weeks and implemented a large part of the merger framework. There is now a single committee with representation from both groups, we have identified seven areas to focus our activity and recruited sub-committee chairs for each, also widened the numbers of persons involved in those sub-committees. It is great to see such an energetic group that cares about our town. The final stage of the merger process will take place at our AGM on 4 November (see below) as we formally confirm Officers and Committee members.

I am delighted to announce that our MP Dominic Grieve has accepted our invitation to be Patron of the Society and will be our guest speaker at the AGM. Further I am pleased that Les Davies, our current President and Sandy Saunders, past Chairman of the Society and past Chairman of BOTRA have agreed to take the positions of President and Vice President respectively. All of this will be formally put to the membership at the AGM. See you there!

This is a bumper edition of the newsletter as each sub-committee chair sets out their recent activity and plans. I am particularly pleased with the work we have done to identify the right person in Royal Mail and highlight the sad state of the pillar boxes. I am sure you have seen the results, what a contrast. Taking pride in our town is just one aspect of our work as we **celebrate the past, promote the present and influence the future** of Beaconsfield. Examples of each are given below: the Enid Blyton sundial installation at Bekonskot, our voluntary groups showcase event, Beaconsfield NOW and the ongoing input into planning matters – Local Plan Watch, Wilton Park Watch and the constant flow of good, bad and ugly development requests. Of particular concern are recent applications on the Penn Road, despite being designated a "Residential Area of Exceptional Character".

The Beaconsfield Society remains engaged and active. This newsletter reflects this, I commend it to you all and invite you to pass it on to neighbours and friends who care about our Town. Encourage them to join us, our voice is made all the more authentic and loud with increasing membership.

Finally to BOTRA members, do sign up for membership (see below) recent months have demonstrated what we all hoped, we really are stronger together.

The Mayor, Town Crier, Rt Hon Dominic Grieve and our Citizen of the Year, Sylvia Jones, opened the event on the Council Green, slightly later than previously, at 11am. This enabled us time to erect a selection of marquees and gazebos. This year we trialled marquees and providing tables for stall holders. This proved to be a big success.

We were delighted to welcome so many stall holders. Entertainment was provided by the Beaconsfield High School instrumental ensemble and choir as well as the Beaconsfield Schools soul band. Go DJ helped with the sound.

The Scout's barbeque was so popular it was a sell-out. The Guide's cakes and refreshments were equally as popular.

Despite a little rain, the event went well and feedback was very positive.

Thank you so much to the not for profit organisations who make such a difference for local residents as well as supporting this valuable event. Discussion is starting about next year's Beaconsfield Now which may be a change from the usual so please watch this space....

Enid Blyton's Sundial shines again

Kari Dorme

On 21 September 2016, an audience of more than 50 gathered in glorious sunshine at Bekonscot Model Village to celebrate the unveiling of a very special sundial, which was originally positioned high up on the south gable of Green Hedges, Enid Blyton's home in Beaconsfield. Dr Frank King, Chairman of the British Sundial Society, began the event with an account of the two-year project to restore the sundial. Brian Newman-Smith, MD of Bekonscot, said how delighted he was that the model village should be its new home. Kari Dorme, purchaser of the sundial, told the story of its rediscovery and rescue. Mike Elliott, chairman of The Beaconsfield Society gave a vote of thanks to all concerned and emphasized the Society's commitment to raising awareness of Beaconsfield's past.

Meticulous restoration after the sundial had been lost for 40 years

Dr Frank King's address was a fascinating account of the painstaking restoration work carried out over the previous two years. Five different workshops were involved in tasks such as straightening the bent gnomon (the projecting piece that shows the time by the position of its shadow) and gold-plating the gnomon and its fixing bolts, as well as re-gilding all the roman numerals.

Dr King's meticulous research confirmed that the sundial was actually commissioned by Charles Albert Milton Mount Maggs, for whom 'Green Hedges' was built in c.1912 (hence the quotation from Milton on its face). The sundial has been mounted on a specially constructed brick column, an almost exact copy of the columns of the verandah at 'Green Hedges'. And the little house which goes on top of the column is in the mock-Tudor style of the original gable at Enid Blyton's house at 42 Penn Road, demolished in 1973.

Kari Dorme, committee member of The Beaconsfield Society, told the audience that it was a dream come true to see Enid's sundial so beautifully restored and given pride of place at Bekonscot Model Village. This was a happy ending to a mystery story that started three years ago in 2013, just after the Enid Blyton week of celebrations she had organized for The Beaconsfield Society, which had attracted wide attention. Out of the blue, a retired builder contacted her to say he had rescued Enid's sundial when 'Green Hedges' was demolished. He would have sent it to auction but first asked whether she was interested in buying it.

Having checked on its provenance, she acquired it and offered it to Bekonscot, who in turn contacted the British Sundial Society. Dr King pronounced it a very fine sundial in its own right even without the Enid Blyton connection, and set about supervising the extensive restoration work required. Enid loved to take her two daughters to Bekonscot Model Village and she even wrote a small book about it called the *Enchanted Village*, which is still in print. Enid Blyton belongs to Beaconsfield and now at last her sundial has found its rightful home in Bekonscot.

Photo Gallery Summer 2016



Beaconsfield Now! 2016 Photos courtesy of Studio 67, in the Town Hall and Laurence Smaje



Photo courtesy of Bekonscot

Recent months have kept TBS Planning Sub-Committee very busy with various planning issues in the town. We have attended meetings with Inland Homes about the proposed Community Hub at Wilton Park. We have queried with them how the Hub will be owned, maintained and used - all of these issues are, as yet, undecided but questions have been raised. We will be attending the Stakeholders' Meeting at SBDC at the end of October to find out what will be revealed in Phase 2 of the Consultation on the Emerging Local Plan and we will report to you on the revelations, in particular with regard to Wilton Park and release of Green Belt. We have met with the Mayor and Conservation specialists to discuss the potential for a "Local List" of heritage assets for the town and have raised your concerns regarding the demolition of some beautiful old homes and also some alterations to listed buildings. There certainly is a groundswell of public opinion against overdevelopment in the town.

We are often contacted by members concerned about unsympathetic development and we are always happy to assist where we can. Such is the current level of development in the town that one wonders whether there is a policy of "martini development" being applied - "anytime, any place, anywhere"! What can members do if they are affected by un-neighbourly development? A good starting point is the current Local Plan on the SBDC web-site and to read the planning policies set out in it. If the property is located in the Green Belt, Conservation Area, Residential Area of Exceptional Character, Area of Special Character or if it is a Listed Building, then some extra grounds for objection may apply. Other policies which can often be applied are:

- Policy EP3 - scale, layout, siting, height, design, external materials and use should be compatible with the character and amenities of the site, the adjoining development and the locality in general.
- Policy H9 - development should be compatible with the character of the surrounding area in terms of density, layout, height, scale, form and materials and should not adversely affect the character of the locality.
- Policy H10 - development in a Residential Area of Exceptional Character should not have an adverse effect on that exceptional character; it should reflect the prevailing density and conversion of single dwellings into flats will not normally be permitted.
- Core Strategy 8 - development should make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area, be of a high standard of design and heritage features and their settings should be protected.

The number of objection letters received is also highly important. Planning applications can be determined by a sole planning officer acting under "delegated powers" but will be decided by the Planning Committee at SBDC if at least 10 objection letters are received. It is important to note that objections in the format of a petition or standardised letter will only count as one objection - so make sure that each objection letter is individually worded. Objection letters should quote the planning reference number and be sent via e-mail to planning@southbucks.gov.uk or posted to SBDC, Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham UB9 4LH.

The Planning Committee at SBDC Capswood meets approximately every 4 weeks and meetings are open to the public so that you can hear the decisions made. The agenda for each meeting is published on the SBDC web-site beforehand and will list the planning applications to be discussed. The planning officer will firstly introduce the planning applications and in certain circumstances the public may then speak against an application for a total of 5 minutes only. The meetings usually take place at 4.15pm on Wednesdays at the SBDC offices at Capswood in Denham. Public speaking only applies to applications which are being recommended for approval and where at least 10 objection letters have been received. Invitation letters are sent to the objectors entitled to speak approximately 7 days before the meeting. Speakers must register their wish to speak at least 2 days prior to the meeting. There is a strict 5 minute limit on public speaking - i.e. only 5 minutes in total per application, shared between the speakers (one speaker would have 5 minutes; 5 speakers would have one minute each, etc). Therefore, it is important to be prepared and to establish who is to speak. The Planning Committee will then make its decision. If the decision is deferred after the public speech, no further invitation to speak is given but further comments may be made in writing.

If you are affected by un-neighbourly planning applications, remember to make your voice heard by objecting to SBDC and enlist support. Typically, only adjoining neighbours receive notice of a planning application from the Council - but you will need at least 10 objection letters for a planning application to be referred to the Planning Committee. *** *Please note also that a Public Exhibition relating to the Emerging Local Plan is scheduled to take place at the Town Hall from 9am - 12 noon on 12th November.****

Heritage Visit to Chenies Manor (20th July)

John Burton

On a glorious July afternoon, eighteen members of the Society including those from the previous Beaconsfield Society and BOTRA enjoyed a conducted tour of Chenies Manor and the gardens. Our guide for the afternoon enlightened us on the history of the house, a Grade 1 listed building that was constructed by Sir John Cheyne as a fortified manor house in the mid-15th century. We were told that Tudor monarchs, including Henry VIII and Catherine Howard and Queen Elizabeth I were regular visitors. The original building was extended by John Russell, 1st Earl of Bedford in the 1600's and the manor house remained as part of the Russell estate until 1950 and is now the MacLeod Matthews family home.

Restoration work has continued until the present day and recently the 16th century pavilion has been restored. Over the centuries the house has been changed architecturally, but it is now 'L' shaped with the entrance at the meeting of the two wings. The 22 fine chimneys are constructed in individual designs.

Once inside the ground floor one is greeted by a parlour with a beamed ceiling and a wide fireplace. Most of the rooms are filled with beautiful antique furniture and the dining room has a fine display of silverware. The spiral staircase has a handrail carved into the brickwork, it is in this area that it is claimed that footsteps are still sometimes heard crossing the gallery. Speculation tends towards a ghost of Henry VIII. Among the various bedchambers on the first floor is the nursery where a collection of antique dolls were on display along with their prams. Also in this room was a 'priest hole' which led to secure hiding places.

After the guided tour of the house it was time for tea in the garden before exploring the extensive grounds. Here we saw a wonderful planting of perennial shrubs, roses, annuals and especially Dahlias. Chenies also has a special Physic Garden with ten beds of herbs.

Environment Group

Jeannette Buckle

This year's activities have been varied and fun as well as good for the soul. Our local environment is very important and the more pleasant our streets and green spaces are the more contented we feel, just like our bulb planting aspirations, we shoot up on that 'Happiness' Index!

A few highlights of our activities include garden maintenance of the area, adjacent to Aylesbury End, known as the Market Garden, removing four sacks of garden cuttings in the process. Maintaining and watering the plants in the trough and the planter in the Market Garden, six planters on the kerb on the west side of Aylesbury End and the two hanging baskets on the Reading Room. Removal of illegal nuisance signs in the town. Finally, but not least, there have been our various litter picking events including the Clean for the Queen litter pick on the 3rd April. Here with the help organizers also from the Scouts, Beaconsfield WI, and TBS together with various volunteers we collected a whopping 45 sacks full of rubbish, 10 of which were filled with recycling.

Do come and join us at the Old Town War Memorial and on the Council Green for our bulb-planting days on 29th and 30th October respectively – further details on our website. Beaconsfield will bloom.....

The Society in touch

Pete Foster

Since the merger with BOTRA we have decided to adopt a different approach to the communications. We intend to increase the flow of communications to members, looking to keep you better informed about town events and issues and to make sure you feel more involved in Society activity. We are running communications evenings throughout the year with four planned already. These evenings are where you will hear what we are working on and where and what we have been inputting to in and around the town.

Our Facebook page & Twitter feeds are having a very positive effect - we now have the fastest growing Facebook & Twitter followers in town. We reach thousands of people on a daily basis. We are revamping our website and hope to launch this very soon. We are planning a town-wide email newsletter providing many with a facility to talk to many people across the town.

By working with other community groups we hope to allow them to contribute to our new **Beaconsfield Now** online services and promote their events. We do hope you like our new stance on communications and can support us in this to spread the news we bring across the town.

The recently formed Campaigns group are focussing their attention on the key areas that will impact the town in the future. Namely, the Wilton Park development, the relief road, Vision4Beaconsfield and liaising on the Local Plan. It is true to say that up until very recently there has not been very much to report on any of these areas. However, the recent creation of the road for construction traffic going into Wilton Park from the Pyebush roundabout has shown that things have started to move forward in a more tangible way.

Furthermore, there have been two meetings recently of a "Wilton Park Community Hub Consultation Group" and we have attended and participated at both meetings. Whilst the consultation has been solely focussed on the hub for Wilton Park, we are keen that the group also considers what is already available in Beaconsfield, with the goal of 'adding to' and not 'to duplicate' facilities for the town. Further consultation meetings are planned over the coming months and we will continue to participate.

We expect activities concerning the relief road and the Wilton Park development to increase in the near future and we therefore anticipate the need for greater attention to these areas than has been the case in the past year, so look for news on our website and our social media feeds.

The Society<http://www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk>

The current Committee is as follows:

President: Les Davies Vice-President: Sandy Saunders

Chairman: Mike Elliott

Secretary: Laurence Smaje Treasurer: Graeme Richards

Members: Tony Bristow, John Burton, Kari Dorme, Nanu Hodson, Debbie Marsden,

Colin Mitchell, Alison Wheelhouse. *Newsletter Editor: Tony Bristow*

Co-opted members from the former BOTRA Committee:

Tom Aspinall, Keith Bowyer, Jeanette Buckle, Jackie Dawes, Rachel Ferguson,

Pete Foster, William Story. *Associate members: Judy McDonnell, Liz Stevens.*

Since the merger of The Beaconsfield Society and BOTRA, there has been a considerable growth in interest in our internet and social media presence. All members are actively encouraged to direct those who could be interested in supporting the society to the following sources of information and become actively involved in helping to preserve and enhance our town for the benefit of present and future residents:

Online: www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BeaconsfieldNow

450 followers and growing.....

Twitter: @TheBecSoc

467 followers and growing.....

The above social media sites are excellent sources of information which highlight current issues in our town and our efforts to tackling local problems – the more support we have the more effective we will be! We hope that the people that engage with us by visiting, following and liking us, will be welcomed as full members in the fullness of time.

For those previously enrolled with BOTRA, your registration has automatically been transferred to the Beaconsfield Society. Congratulations! Why not sign up for full membership; it costs less than 20p a week to show that you care about our Town and support our work. There is an application form on the website.

We hope you found the Newsletter interesting and informative. Feel free to pass this on to interested neighbours and friends and do encourage them to come along to our events and become members.

**The Annual General Meeting for the year 2015/2016
will be held in The Fitzwilliams Centre, Windsor End**

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE AGM

1. Welcome by the President
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the last AGM and matters arising not covered below
4. Chairman’s report
5. Treasurer’s report
6. Election of Officers and Committee
7. Presentation of the Society’s awards
8. Any other business

THE PATRON’S ADDRESS

**The AGM will be followed immediately by a talk by
The Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP**

Refreshments will be available after the talk with time to meet the Speaker and the Committee.
All are welcome and members are encouraged to bring guests!

NOTES

The current Committee is shown on the previous page. If you would like to make any other nomination either as Officer or Committee member, or for either of the Society’s awards below, please make your recommendation to the Secretary, Laurence Smaje, on 01494 681165, or email him at laurence@smaje.co.uk or (for the awards) by sending him the tear-off strip below, not later than Thursday 20th October 2016.

Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award - in recognition of the work of an individual person who over a number of years has made a significant contribution to the life of the Beaconsfield community as a whole.

Outstanding Building of the Year Award - in recognition of what the Society considers to be the outstanding design for a building (of any type) erected or modified in Beaconsfield in the past year.



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- Do you have a nomination for an Officer or Committee Member? Please give his/her name and contact details. We will be in touch with you.

- Do you have a nomination for Citizen of the Year? Please give his/her name and contact details

- Do you have a nomination for Outstanding Building? Please give its name and location details

Your name.....Address.....Tel.No.....

Please send to the Secretary, Laurence Smaje, 22 Hampden Hill, Beaconsfield HP9 1BP by 20th October