

THE BARNET SOCIETY

It's battle stations ahead!

University keen to unravel the details behind the Battle of Barnet, a grisly encounter in the Wars of the Roses, writes **Nick Jones**

Military archaeologists from Huddersfield University hope to start work within the next few months surveying the possible site of the Battle of Barnet of 1471, in preparation for a full-scale investigation.

Planning for an archaeological dig is finally under way after the Hadley Trust stepped in with a pledge of £50,000 in funding to allow work to start on the project following a fresh initiative by Barnet Museum.

Barnet was among the grisliest battles of the Wars of the Roses and one of those taking part was the 18-year-old Duke of Gloucester, later to become King Richard III, who was killed in the Battle of Bosworth of 1485, and whose remains have been reburied in Leicester Cathedral.

Historians have failed to agree on the precise location of the battle, which took place on 14 April 1471 in fields half a mile, or even up to a mile north, of High Barnet, on either side of the Great North Road.

Currently, the only visual reminder is Hadley Highstone, an obelisk commemorating the battle that was erected in 1740 – but Barnet's battlefield fails to get the recognition it deserves, largely because of uncertainty over the exact site and a lack of vantage points for visitors.

Dr Glenn Foard, Huddersfield University's celebrated military archaeologist, is to supervise the survey and any resulting excavations with the assistance of another



Sophie Aldridge and Sam Royden with cut-outs of 15th century soldiers

of the university's archaeologists, Sam Wilson. They hope that their two-year project will confirm not only the precise site of the conflict, but also reveal far more about what might be the first British battlefield where hand guns were used.

Dr Foard, who is best known for

A future Richard III fought at the Battle of Barnet as an 18-year-old

discovering the location of the final phases of the Battle of Bosworth, thinks that out of three possible locations for the battle, the most likely was in and around Wrotham Park and nearby farmland owned by Wrotham Estates.

This would place the boundaries of the battlefield site farther north than those designated by English Heritage, and might perhaps be closer to Potters Bar and perhaps straddle the border with Hertsmere

Initial work would involve studying aerial photography and site

surveys in preparation for detailed investigations by a team of military archaeologists and volunteer metal detectorists.

A final go-ahead for a thorough survey of the likely battlefield area follows a decision by Barnet Museum, with the support of the Hadley Trust, to take the lead in sponsoring the project in conjunction with Huddersfield University. Together with the Barnet Society and the Battlefields Trust, the museum has opened discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund for possible future funding.

HLF officials met the museum's trustees and other representatives to explore ideas for a range of community-based heritage projects to widen awareness of and engagement in Barnet's role in one of the decisive battles of the Wars of the Roses.

Mike Noronha, a museum trustee, welcomed the HLF officials and explained to them that any artefacts found during the excavation would be displayed at the museum. **Continued Page 2**

Battle of Barnet

Continued from Page 1

An interactive Battle of Barnet website, information boards, an app for battlefield walks and promotional materials for schools are some of the initiatives that the museum hopes to take forward. If the museum gets financial support from the HLF, a second application will be made to fund a two-storey extension.

Mr Noronha said a heritage trail and an exhibition of any finds would help explain what happened when the armies of the House of York and the House of Lancaster clashed on the fields surrounding what is now Hadley Green and Monken Hadley.

In its section on the Battle of Barnet, the museum displays two cannon balls thought to have been fired on the battlefield, but military archaeologists hope they might find many other artefacts, including lead shot used in early hand guns.

Howard Simmons, who leads for the Battlefields Trust on the Battle of Barnet project, said there was a desperate need for a proper interpretative trail of the battlefield site.

“We know that Edward IV brought 1,000 Burgundian soldiers with him. They had hand guns with them, and if we can find any of the small bullets that would prove they were used at Barnet, as Huddersfield University proved at the Battle of Bosworth.

“We now have the chance to investigate privately owned land at Wrotham Park which has not been thoroughly surveyed before.

“Glenn Foard and his team at last have the chance to try to answer some of the unanswered questions about what after all is one of only two battlefield sites in Greater London, the other being at Brentford in 1642 at the start of the English Civil War, when a small Parliamentary force of 3,500 men was defeated by the Royalist main army of 14,000 men, and the town of Brentford then sacked.”



The fire-ravaged and dilapidated nurses home is to be demolished

Barnet eye-sore to go

One of High Barnet's worst eyesores, the derelict former nurses home opposite the Arkley public house, is to be demolished to make way for a housing scheme that aims to provide approximately 100 new homes.

Linden Homes has bought the 3.9-acre site, which includes the fire-ravaged block of flats that once provided accommodation for nurses at Barnet Hospital, and also other vacant flats and offices.

The site has been on the market since it was put up for sale in October 2013 by the Barnet, Chase Farm and Royal Free Hospitals Trust.

Outline planning consent for around 100 homes had previously been obtained by the NHS in 2006, but the approval has expired and Linden Homes intends to submit a fresh application to Barnet Council in early summer.

The company says it plans to consult neighbours and local groups before finalising its plan, but if approval is granted the aim would be to start construction immediately.

The site extends south from its frontage on Barnet Road (A411), opposite the Arkley,

to a hedge just to the north of the Barnet Hospital buildings in Wellhouse Lane. The land backs on to houses in Elmbank Avenue.

Entry to the site would be from Barnet Road and Linden Homes says it intends to build “a high-quality mix of houses and apartments, including some affordable housing”.

The Barnet Society has said repeatedly that leaving the nurses block of flats vacant for so long, and then allowing it to be vandalised, was a scandalous example of a wasted public asset.

For years it has been a shocking reminder of neglect, with ragged blinds blowing from smashed window frames, a partly collapsed roof and walls blackened by fires and graffiti. Access to the site is currently prevented by large wooden hoardings which have obscured the worst of the devastation.

In a statement to the Society, Linden Homes says it is committed to consulting the local community. “We are looking forward to a positive dialogue about the significant contribution we believe we can make to delivering the homes that Barnet needs.”

A fervent wish for the Physic Well

Mock-Tudor well house in danger after years of neglect by the council, writes **Nick Jones**

Local residents had a rare opportunity to see inside Barnet's historic physic well when Barnet Museum organised an open day at the well house, a short walk from the hospital.

The well sits on a green space midway between Well Approach and Well Road and is surrounded by houses that were once part of an estate of council houses.

The future of the mock-Tudor well house, which was erected in the 1930s around the original 17th-century well is again in doubt as a result of inquiries being made on behalf of Barnet Council.

A consultation exercise is being conducted by Barnet Homes, the "arm's length management organisation" established by the council in 2004 to manage the borough's 15,000 council homes.

In seeking suggestions for the well's future, Barnet Homes admits that the building has been "neglected for some time due to lack of use" and says its major works team has been asked to look at possible uses if the structure was refurbished. Local organisations are being asked for their ideas.

The open day was held by the museum to help promote a campaign to get the outer structure repaired and to find a way to guarantee a secure future for the well itself, which is one of the oldest constructions in High Barnet.

Inside the outer well house is a stairway of 12 steps that leads down to the almost totally unchanged vaulted well chamber, with its original red floor bricks and two tanks that are filled by spring water.

Successive Barnet Councils have made little or no effort to recognise the historic importance of the well house or maintain its exterior. Many of the timbers are badly decayed, and in places some of the



Many of the well house's timbers are badly decayed and fallen away

wood has fallen away. Mike Jordan, chair of the museum's trustees, thinks that the best solution might be for the museum to take over control of the well house, and with financial help from the council work out ways of opening the well to visitors on a regular basis, so as to guarantee its future as part of High Barnet's historic heritage.

"Barnet's mineral spring water never quite managed to become as famous as that of spa towns such as Bath and Tunbridge Wells but we know it was promoted as a medicinal cure as early as the 16th-century and then increased in popularity once it was publicised by celebrities like Samuel Pepys in the 17th-century.

"Our well house doesn't even have a commemorative plaque yet it could become a real attraction for visitors and tourists. Pepys societies in America and Japan are just some of the groups who we know would love to put it on itineraries for their UK tours."

Mr Jordan welcomed visitors to the open day and with help of

torchlights took them down the narrow steps to look at the tanks that are filled by spring water.

As a result of recent rainfall, the water was muddier than usual. "We know that people were still drinking water from the well in the 1940s. A brother and sister visiting the well told me they hadn't been back inside the well house since their childhood days in the last war. They remember the water was cold but "tasted sweet".

Among the first-time visitors to the well house were Andrew Christie, a supporter of the museum and Barnet resident since 1949, and also Councillor Paul Edwards, who represents Underhill ward.

Cllr Edwards said that he had been canvassing Well Road for 30 years but had never before been inside the well house. "As a local councillor I think the best solution for the well would be for the museum to take control, for Barnet Council to help with repairs and maintenance, and then hopefully the museum could open it up to the public on a regular basis."

Council says no to free park

Proposal for half an hour's free parking lost by one vote at stormy Barnet council meeting, writes **Nick Jones**

A joint attempt by the Barnet Society and the Barnet Times to persuade Barnet Council to introduce a period of free car parking to boost trade in the borough's high streets was rejected by the environment committee.

A motion calling for half an hour's free parking, as proposed by the Barnet Times, was finally defeated by one vote after a bad-tempered and sometimes noisy meeting at Hendon Town Hall in March.

Barnet Council's decision to withdraw all parking meters taking cash and to operate a charging system that requires payment by credit card or phone has attracted national criticism, and the committee's discussion was frequently interrupted by shouts from the public gallery as traders and local residents challenged the councillors.

The protests were loudest when shopkeepers from High Barnet and North Finchley reacted angrily to some members of the committee, insisting that paid-for car parking spaces in the borough's shopping centres were nearly always full and that there was no need for free parking to win back lost customers.

The Barnet Society's proposal for an hour's free parking was not forced to a vote. But the committee chairman, Councillor Dean Cohen, undertook to produce figures to justify his claim that there was an 85 per cent usage of both the High Street parking bays and the council-owned car parks in High Barnet. He insisted that there was no justification for free parking.

Two television crews recorded the proceedings, one from the BBC and another from ITV, which is intending to feature "Barnet's parking wars" in a three-part documen-



tary later this summer.

Two petitions were formally presented to the committee. Nicholas Jones, chair of the Barnet Society, handed in a petition supported by 2,104 signatures, and Anna Slater, chief reporter of the Barnet Times, spoke of the 5,000 signatures and expressions of support for the petition launched by her newspaper for half an hour's free parking in high

'Every business I visited supported demands for an hour's free parking'

*- Jonathan Supran, secretary
Barnet Society*

streets across the borough.

Speaking in support of the Barnet Society's petition, Jonathan Supran, the honorary secretary, said 45 High Barnet shops and traders had collected over 1,900 signatures on top of the 130 residents who had signed at the annual Barnet Christmas Fair "Every single business

I visited supported the Society's demand for an hour's free parking. I heard numerous examples of the loss of business because of the current parking charges.

"Apart from the charge itself, the other reason given was the difficulties people, particularly elderly, experience in trying to pay by phone or credit card for short stays.

"Sometimes customers just want to stop very briefly to drop or collect something, but are deterred by the current system. Others businesses told me that previous customers went elsewhere when the parking changes were introduced," said Mr Supran.

Cllr Cohen disputed the Society's findings arguing that the occupancy rate of spaces in the High Street and High Barnet's council-owned car parks was high and that they were often fully occupied.

He challenged the Society to explain how free parking would assist local shopkeepers and traders if the occupancy rate was already hitting the council's target of 85 per cent, "or close to 85 per cent".

To support the council's argument, Cllr Cohen quoted Barnet

king – but the fight goes on



Message to the council: (L-R) Jonathan Supran, Barnet Society; Gail Laser of Love Barnet, and James Freeman, managing director of the Victoria Bakery, at the council meeting. **Right:** An ITV camera crew interviews Jonathan Supran in the High Street for its documentary on 'Barnet's parking wars'



Residents Association, which he said agreed with him that High Barnet's parking spaces were well used and that free parking would not help.

When challenged over the lack of accurate data and the need to encourage shoppers to return to High Barnet, Cllr Cohen admitted that the council had a responsibility to justify its figures. In agreeing to take note of the Society's petition, the committee decided that Cllr Cohen should work with officials to provide more details of occupancy of parking spaces. He promised to supply the Society with a breakdown of the level of car parking transactions within two weeks. **[As of May 12, this has not happened - Editor]**

When the Barnet Times' petition was discussed, several councillors again supported Cllr Cohen's assertion that spaces in high streets across the borough were fully used. Again there were renewed protests from the public gallery and shouts about the councillors "not listening" to local people.

Helen Michael, proprietor of Café Buzz in North Finchley, who

spoke in support of half an hour's free parking, said her business and many others in North Finchley had not recovered from the introduction of phone and credit card parking four years ago.

"Half an hour's free parking would get customers back to the High Road, and half the battle to win back that lost custom is to get them to stop off in North Finchley. Shopping in Borehamwood and Potters Bar has been rejuvenated by the half hour free parking introduced by Hertsmere. Why won't Barnet Council do the same?"

Another North Finchley trader protested that he had been forced to close down after 23 years in business because the parking controls had driven his customers away.

Cllr Cohen responded by arguing that figures for 2013 showed that the vacancy rate for the borough's high street shops had been at its lowest for a decade. This prompted shouts to the effect that independent traders had been replaced by charity shops and bookmakers.

The angriest exchanges followed the remarks of Cllr Brian Salinger. He said he had no wish to be critical of "the elderly ladies of Barnet" but if they were having troubling putting their credit cards in the parking meters or using their mobile phones, perhaps he was entitled to ask whether they were "capable of managing to drive their cars".

Local residents who lived within two miles of the shops should be able to "walk it or bike it" to their high street.

Shouts of "Shame on you" and "You've been ignoring us for years" interrupted Cllr Salinger's attempt to justify his comments.

When Cllr Alan Schneiderman moved to support the Barnet Times petition he was greeted with applause from the public gallery. He said half an hour's free parking had been called for by traders across the borough and had the support of the Labour Party. But when it went to the vote, the motion was defeated by six votes to five.

Annual General Meeting, June 18th

Notice is hereby given that the 70th Annual General Meeting of the Barnet Society will be held at 7.30 pm on Thursday 18th June 2015 at Pennefather Hall, Christ Church, St Albans Road, Barnet, EN5 4LA, for the transaction of the following business:

To confirm the minutes of the 69th AGM, 26 June 2014

To receive and adopt (if approved) the 70th annual report

To receive and adopt (if approved) the Chairman's report.

To receive and adopt (if approved) the Hon Treasurer's report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015

To receive a report from the Planning and Environment subcommittee

To elect officers for the ensuing year

To elect members to serve on the committee

Any other business.

Prior to the formal business, Simon Marsh, research officer of the Battlefields Trust, will give a talk on plans for a survey to determine the site of the Battle of Barnet. He will be accompanied by Howard Simmons, also of the Trust, who is advising Barnet Museum on an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Officers and committee 2014-2015

President: Aubrey Rose

Vice-Presidents:

R Marson, David Lee, Dr J. Remfry

Life members: A Neville, Mrs M Howells

Committee:

Nicholas Jones (Chair)

Gail Laser (Vice-chair)

Jonathan Supran (Secretary)

Robin Bishop (Planning and Environment)

Mary Carroll (Treasurer)

Teresa Kelly (Membership Secretary) 108 Wentworth Road, Barnet, EN5 4NU
020 8449 6812

Eamonn Rafferty (Newsletter Editor)

John Gardiner (Newsletter Distribution)

Frances Wilson (Minutes Secretary)

Judith Clouston

Peter Willcocks

Andrew Hutchings



The new-look Spires, currently being refurbished

Minutes of the 69th AGM, St Albans Road, Barnet Thursday 26th June 2014

There were 65 members present.

Apologies for Absence:

Theresa Villiers MP, Dr Mary Rossiter, Pauline Jarman, Marion & Ray Hopwood, Mr & Mrs Ken Rowland, Geoffrey Crabtree, Carrie & David Norris, Vicki Harris, Graenia Colhoun, Hugh Martin, David Lee, Penny Dye and Terence Atkins

Introduction

Nick Jones, Chair, welcomed everyone and introduced Charlotte Dunlop of the Pears Property Group who gave the latest details of the plans to modernise the Spires Shopping Centre. He also thanked the group for the commitment and investment they had put into Barnet Market.

Redevelopment of The Spires Shopping Centre

Charlotte Dunlop said their first priority had been to restore Barnet Market where they had resurfaced the site and put in better facilities for the stall holders. They obtained planning permission to use the site for parking when market not in use.

The next phase is to redevelop the Shopping Centre - Pears received 1,000 responses to consultation, so they adopted the scheme preferred, and will retain the spires, demolish the rotunda and re-pave the entrance so it opens up the area and feels more like a shopping area.

The Council had given permis-



urbished, with Carluccio's due to open soon

1, Pennefather Hall, St ursday 26th June 2014

sion for Carluccio's on the site that was occupied by WH Smith and will open in the summer. It is hoped that Carluccio's will act as a catalyst for more retailers.

There followed a lively discussion with the following questions.

Could Pears integrate the whole site - Stapleton Rd, Salisbury Rd and St Albans Rd? Charlotte said this was not possible because of the heavy traffic to the service road used by Waitrose but were looking at a circular route linking the Spires with the High Street & Market

Spires Car Park – Not conducive to shoppers because of the cost, the opening hours and poor customer service. Charlotte explained that the car park is run by Legion Group who are tenants of Pears and they have a very long lease.

What action is being taken to let the vacant units? – Charlotte said they had sent out 500 letters but only received 2 replies, both not interested. They had offered 2 units rent free but still no interest. She explained that most retailers are looking for much bigger units with easy parking, such as out of town shopping centres.

Chipping Barnet Town Team

Gail Laser Vice Chairman of Barnet Society and member of the Town Team explained that the Town Team met every 2 months to

discuss progress of improvements to the High Street and Spires and those interested could attend.

They are currently fitting out a pop up shop where Greggs used to be, called 'Love Barnet'. Barnet College are carrying out the work and it will be used by retailers and charities to promote their work.

There are also several activities taking place to encourage footfall such as 24th August Sreet Food Festival and there will be events in the Courtyards during the school holidays.

Judith Clouston said she was working closely with the Council to increase the width of the pavements to make the area more attractive and enable trees to be planted.

Gail Laser emphasised that all residents must work together to improve our town. She then thanked Charlotte for her presentation.

Annual General Meeting

Chairman Nick Jones

1. Minutes of the 68th AGM 20th June '13

The Minutes were approved and signed by NJ

2. The Chairman's Report

Nick Jones introduced himself as the Chairman explaining that as a journalist he had made every effort to refresh and improve the ways we communicate to members and supporters. The Newsletter had been modernised and the website has been transformed in both content and appearance. It was very encouraging to see the number of on-line hits for reports on such issues as Barnet Market, The redevelopment of the Spires, Monitoring planning applications, the possibility of an archaeological excavation on Battle of Barnet and many other issues.

The report was adopted by all present

3. Hon. Treasurer's Report

Penny Dye had provided an Annual Report which was included in the Newsletter. This showed a surplus of £8,930.40p

The report was adopted by all present

4. Report from Planning & Environment Sub -Committee

It has been a busy year with the restoration of the Market and the

redevelopment of the Spires. We believe that a master plan should be established for the strategic development of the whole area.

The Sub Committee have all been involved with the Chipping Barnet Town Team, which has met several times this year and are satisfied all parties have the same objectives.

1 Church Passage continues to be an eye sore in the Conservation Area and the Committee are pressing for more protection in these areas and have monitored and commented on several planning issues affecting Chipping Barnet.

Major concerns are possible developments at Underhill Football Ground, East Barnet Gas Works site and vacant NHS properties. Robin Bishop said it was interesting to note that Barnet Hospital is the biggest employer in Barnet.

He also provided a report on Green Belt as we had been asked to contribute to a public consultation by the London Assembly and All-Party Parliamentary Group on its protection.

The Report was adopted by all present.

5. Election of Officers to serve on the Committee

Nick Jones handed the Chair to Aubrey Rose, who proposed Nick Jones be elected as Chair for 2014-15. This was approved by all

Nick Jones confirmed that the following have been proposed by the Committee

Vice-Chairman . Gail Laser, Hon Treasurer, Mary Carroll, Hon Secretary Jonathan Supran Membership Secretary: Teresa Kelly

This was approved by all

The following were also confirmed on the Committee:

Judith Clouston, John Gardiner, Peter Willcocks, Robin Bishop, Frances Wilson, Eamonn Rafferty, Andrew Hutchings.

This was approved by all

6. Any Other Business

A move to provide a shuttle bus from High Barnet Station to the hospital was turned down by TFL on the grounds of expense and practicality.

Concerns were raised about high parking charges at the Spires and the hospital.

The meeting closed at 9.0pm.

Focus on broadband and parking

In his Chair's report, **Nick Jones** outlines the progress made in the key campaigns that took up most of the society's efforts last year

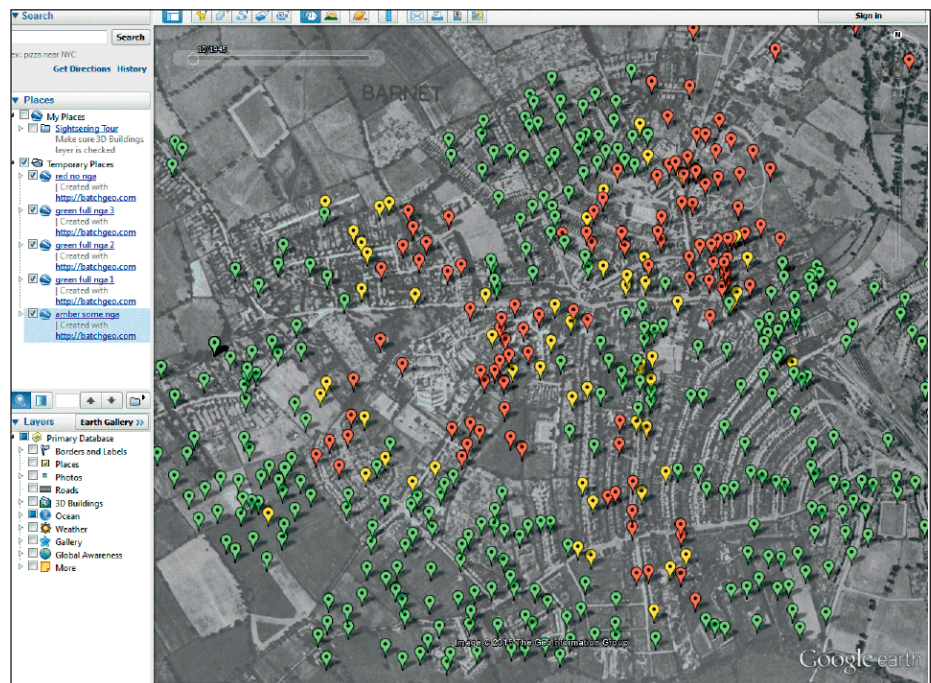
Strenuous efforts were made during the year to promote the Barnet Society's two ongoing campaigns, the attempt to persuade the council to allow a period of free parking along the entire length of the High Street, and our long-running demand that British Telecom should extend its roll-out of high-speed broadband to include the 3,000 local households that lack a fast connection.

So far we have made little headway convincing Barnet's councillors that they should help local traders by easing parking controls in the town centre, but we do hope that residents' surveys showing the extent of untapped demand for fast broadband might persuade BT to install at least some of the nine fibre-enabled telephone cabinets that are desperately needed.

In the year ahead, one of the great challenges for the Society will be to find ways to support Barnet Museum's application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for financial assistance towards the cost of engaging in a survey and archaeological excavation to determine the precise site of the Battle of Barnet.

Barnet Council has shown a woeful lack of interest in the project, but with the encouragement of the Museum, the Hadley Trust has donated £50,000 to meet the cost of work to be undertaken by a team of military archaeologists from Huddersfield University led by Dr Glenn Foard.

With the backing of the Society and the Battlefields Trust, the Museum is drawing up plans for its HLF application to ensure that any artefacts that are found are



Seeing red: the scale of the High Barnet broadband problem

properly cleaned and displayed and that every effort is made to involve the local community and provide a lasting legacy of Barnet's historic role in one of the grisliest battles

BT alternative

Barnet residents who cannot get BT Infinity have been offered an alternative system, offering speeds of between 16-30mb.

Nik Fox, of Sentia, says the system uses radio frequencies to an antenna on the roof of houses, rather than the fibre optic wires that BT deploy.

It has been used successfully in Northern Ireland and is being rolled out to 6,000 homes in Lincolnshire. It costs £35 a month, on top of a £200 installation fee, but, there is no data cap. Anyone interested should register at **www.ionnet.co.uk**

The scheme would be commercially viable in Barnet if just 100 households signed up.

of the Wars of the Roses.

Another challenge for the Society is to help promote a wider discussion on the future of Barnet's historic physic well, which is now being reviewed following an intervention by Barnet Homes, the organisation responsible for managing council housing in the borough.

We were disappointed to be told that we had failed in an application made in conjunction with Christ Church for a community grant from the Capital Clean-up Fund towards the cost of cleaning up the frontage and lych gate at the entrance to the closed graveyard in St Albans Road.

There has been much praise during the year for the work of Martin Standley, webmaster for the Society's website www.barnet-society.org.uk, and for that of our newsletter editor Eamonn Rafferty for the transformation they have achieved in the presentation of the Society's work and activities.

As chair I would like to renew our appeal for members of the Society, and others who might be interested, to volunteer to assist in our work campaigning for a better Barnet.

A mixed bag, but food for thought on High Street

Robin Bishop,
Planning and
Environment
Annual Report

Chipping Barnet's most obvious boost in the last year has been the transformation of the High Street end of The Spires. Carluccio's new restaurant and deli is good gastronomic news, but the Society also applauds the design improvements sponsored by the owners, the William Pears Group.

The rotunda has gone, the precinct is being re-paved in natural stone, and the spires themselves have been liberated from their brick flanks. Altogether, a great improvement and one for which the Society can claim some credit.

Another significant change is in Mays Lane, where the first blocks of Brook Valley Gardens now rear up. They're a lot higher than the existing houses and shops, and make little effort to blend in, but let's wait for completion of the estate before judging.

The new houses are needed, but there's a darker side. Most of the tenants of the old Dollis Valley Estate are being decanted – but where to? Barnet's almost complete lack of new social housing means that it won't be in our area, which can't be good for a balanced society.

Nearby, the Valley Pre-school seems likely to close. For 37 years the nursery has provided education and support for young children and their families in and around the Dollis Estate. Last year it moved to temporary premises on the understanding that a replacement would be built as part of Brook Valley Gardens. So it will be – but for a commercial nursery, not the



Patisserie Joie de Vie shows how good a traditional shop front can look

non-profit Valley Pre-School. The latter has been shabbily treated by our Council, and symbolises something happening across the Borough: opting for short-term financial gain over longer-term investment in our own community.

The third big change – often out of public gaze – has been the sprouting of home extensions in gardens and on roofs, and conversion of commercial premises to flats.

One of the Coalition's last acts has been to extend Permitted Development rights for extensions and change of use to residential until 2019

One of the Coalition's last acts was extending Permitted Development rights for extensions and change of use to residential until 2019, so the trend is likely to continue.

The Society is ambivalent about this. Intensifying residential use reduces pressure to build on the

Green Belt, but extensions don't usually increase the number of people housed. And what do neighbours feel about them? We would like to hear from both sides.

Residential developments that we supported include the new Older Women's Co-Housing in Union Street and conversion of the old Courthouse (instead of the demolition originally proposed).

Unfortunately the old Schoolhouse in Moxon Street is apparently too dilapidated to save, and will be replaced by new housing. More substantial upcoming residential proposals that we will be watching closely will be those for the former Elmbank nurses hostel (opposite the Arkley pub) and for the field adjoining Whittings Primary School, and, probably, before long, for the former Underhill stadium.

Apart from The Spires, the town centre has few improvements to show despite the efforts of the Town Team (on which we have been represented by Judith Clouston & Gail Laser). We helped to get Guns & Smoke's shop-front planning application refused but the façade of 1 Church Passage has yet to be restored.

At least the planners have finally succeeded in ridding the Crown & *Continued on Page 10*

P&E report

Continued from Page 9

Anchor of most of its disfiguring adverts. And the new Patisserie Joie de Vie, on the corner of Moxon Street, shows how attractive a traditional shop front can look.

We are sorry that The Old Red Lion has closed, and that The White Lion's future seems uncertain.

Judith and Gail met the latest Council officer responsible to discuss pavement build-outs in the High Street and improvements to the Wood Street junction. After years of pressing for these, his response was encouraging.

Peter Bradburn has also made suggestions for improving the Wood Street/Wellhouse Road junction. .

Judith and Markus Geiger have also been assisting Barnet Museum's planning application for a rear extension to house relics of the Battle of Barnet and a classroom. An archaeological dig is planned, and significant finds would help safeguard the Museum's future.

Although the design is quite modest, planners intend to recommend refusal, in an in-principle objection to the loss of Metropolitan Open Land.

This seems a case where the potential gain would outweigh the slight loss of amenity.

These fine judgments are critical in, and on the edge of, the Green Belt. We have supported the Barnet Countryside Centre and Noah's Ark Hospice (now on site) and a pair of new houses at 105 Camlet Way because of their strong merits. But we have objected to the trashing of Green Belt land at 56 Hendon Wood Lane.

And we are scrutinising the current proposals to convert two barns at Brent Lodge Farm (in Barnet Gate Lane) and to fell trees and deposit landfill on Old Fold Manor Golf Club.

(See the story that is opposite).



Concerns over golf club trees

Old Fold Manor Golf Club is applying for planning permission for major re-landscaping, **writes Robin Bishop.**

This involves landfill soil along St.Albans Road about 500 yards long and up to 12ft high, improving the driving range and land drainage, and restoring a pitch-and-putt course. It would replace some 50 pollarded Lombardy Poplars near the end of their life with 3,000 new trees and shrubs. The Council owns the land and will receive an undisclosed fee for accepting the waste soil.

The Society is concerned about the loss of so many trees in such a prominent location. The Poplars are part of a band of greenery over half a mile long marking the boundary of Barnet and the Monken Hadley Conservation Area, as well as the Club.

It includes stretches of old hedgerow and copses of mature Oak and other trees at each end, and harbours wildlife.

Together with trees on the other side of St.Albans Road and in Christ Church burial ground, it forms a fine green gateway to Chiping Barnet and heralds the Green Belt. To ensure minimum damage to – and possibly improvement on – the existing scene, the Society's Vice President David Lee has been

in discussions with the Club and the developer.

We've asked for full details of the environmental impact, an independent tree survey, mounding configuration and material, planting, drainage, contractor's access and other technical matters.

At the time of writing, a good deal of information has been provided, we've been assured that archaeologists will be able to investigate the Battle of Barnet, and that public rights of way across the golf course will be safeguarded. David has given advice on improvements on various aspects of the scheme – but we do not yet know to what extent it has been taken.

We had hoped to know more by now, when the planning application is due to have been submitted. Our initial impressions are better than expected, but we will scrutinise the application itself and publish our comments on the Barnet Society website. Comments are welcome.





the plan

Lombardy Poplars along St Albans Road would be replaced by 3,000 new trees and shrubs under the Old Ford Manor Golf Club plan, but the Society's initial impressions are better than expected



'Feisty' women home in on dream

A group of "feisty women" gathered in Union Street, Barnet, for a ceremony marking the start of construction of the first purpose-built co-housing scheme of its kind in the country, writes **Nick Jones**.

A development of 25 flats for older women on the site of what was St Martha's Convent School will be named New Ground to reflect the ground-breaking importance of OWCH – Older Women's Co-Housing of Barnet.

Alongside heaps of rubble from the demolished school buildings, Mrs Shirley Meredeen, the last surviving founder member, told the assembled women that their dream was about to be realised.

After launching their campaign in 1998 to find a suitable site and then obtain planning approval, building work was finally under way, and at last they could look forward to the day they would be moving into their new flats.

For group photographs to celebrate the occasion, the MP for Chipping Barnet, Theresa Villiers, climbed aboard a mechanical digger to congratulate "some very determined ladies" from her constituency, who had shown great foresight. Membership of OWCH is open to women of 50-plus.

Seventeen of the new flats will be owner-occupied and the remaining eight for social housing; the due date for their completion is April 2016.

The site was purchased for the group in 2011 by the Hanover Housing Association and planning approval obtained from Barnet Council in 2013.

Mrs Meredeen thanked the group for their "determination, enthusiasm and stubbornness" in the face of so many difficulties.

"Our housing initiative is a constructive alternative for elderly women facing the loneliness of old age. We are old women from 50 upwards, but we have campaigned with skill and enthusiasm to live independently together."

They had demonstrated the



Theresa Villiers, with some of the OWCH women

collaborative nature of the project by ensuring that there would be social housing units for those women who would be renting. Mrs Meredeen paid tribute to Hanover for having taken them on, without realising "what a bunch of feisty women we are".

She said she hoped the main contractor, Quinn, would deliver a project that was a credit to Barnet. "We want to be part of Barnet; we want to give as well as receive from Barnet."

Mrs Villiers recalled a meeting three years ago with one of the OWCH members, Angela Ratcliffe of the Hadley Residents Association. "She convinced me it would be a great project, despite its being in the middle of a conservation area, and I do pay tribute to you all for persisting with it.

"We will now have some wonderful new homes in Barnet and an opportunity to assist all the residents of this new development to live together and combat loneliness in older people."

Mrs Ratcliffe recalled the meeting of Barnet Council's planning committee that finally gave approval. She remembered being asked by one committee member, Councillor Alison Cornelius, who was also at the ceremony, whether women could remarry and have new husbands living with them on the site.

"I told Councillor Cornelius: 'You give us planning permission, and we'll talk about it tomorrow.' Luckily the plan went through without a hitch. We are not anti-men; men can stay for up to six weeks at a time, but this is a housing scheme for older women."

Councillor Cornelius said she remembered the exchange and understood why there had to be some rules. "I am in full support of this wonderful project, and especially the concept of younger retired women looking after the older women, and then other slightly younger women taking their place."

**BARNET SOCIETY
TREASURER'S REPORT
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
Period to 31st March 2015**

Year to 31st March 2014				Year To 31st March 2015
	INCOMING RESOURCES			
3,642.81	Subscriptions			4,199.02
836.00	Sales			826.00
	Donations			100.00
4.61	Bank Interest			4.52
<u>4,483.42</u>	Total Incoming Resources			<u>5,129.54</u>
	RESOURCES EXPENDED			
(1,295.46)	Newsletter printing & expenses			(2,780.48)
(175.00)	Leaflets			(24.00)
(644.22)	Website			(707.46)
(1,125.00)	Walks books			0.00
0.00	Lectures			(59.12)
<u>(3,239.68)</u>				<u>(3,571.06)</u>
(280.00)	Affiliations to Other Associations & Societies	(385.00)		
(73.00)	Stationery, Postage, Phone & Other Administration	(88.31)		
0.00	Software & Social Media	(482.06)		
(353.00)	Other Activities, including AGM costs			
	AGM costs	(126.57)		
	Xmas Stall	(120.50)		
	Miscellaneous	(150.00)		
(409.99)				<u>(1,352.44)</u>
<u>(4,002.67)</u>	Total Resources expended			<u>(4,923.50)</u>
<u>480.75</u>	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) for the year/period	<u>206.04</u>		
	BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st March 2015			
	ASSETS			
6,497.87	HSBC Deposit Account	6,502.39		
2,372.53	HSBC Current Account	2,121.36		
	Paypal	341.31		
60.00	Prepayments	0.00		
0.0	Books	1,249.60		
<u>8,930.40</u>		<u>10,214.60</u>		
	FUNDS			
8,449.65	Opening Balance at 1st April 2014	8,930.40		
480.75	Current Surplus/(Deficit) for the year to date	206.04		
<u>8,930.40</u>		<u>9,136.44</u>		

Note to the accounts

1. The Society also holds a stock of over 700 copies of 'Rambles Round Barnet' books. Parts 1 & 2.
2. These accounts have not yet been examined by the independent examiner.

Membership Update,

Teresa Kelly, Membership Secretary

We are pleased to welcome the following as new members to Barnet Society (up to 1 April 2015):

Mr Davies, Dr Warren, Alex Rini, Mr Wilson, Ms Michaels, Mr Williams, Ms McCormick, Mr and Mrs Ward, Mr Lewis-Burby, Ms Fisher, Ms Bridgers and Mr Palmer, Mr Waitt, Mr Teemul, Ms Vamathevan Ms Virgo. and Simon Smith.

With this copy of the Annual Report you should also receive a membership renewal letter special-

ly tailored to your own situation. Please read it carefully.

If you have joined in recent months it will request no further payment this year.

If you have a standing order it will remind you of the fact and thank you for paying in this way.

Those, the majority, who pay their subscription by cash, cheque, electronic transfer or PayPal are asked to send payment to the Membership Secretary in the usual

manner. If you should wish to consider setting up a standing order the necessary form is provided.

Even if you have no payment to make, please do check the accuracy of the contact details printed on the letter, correct as necessary and return it to the Membership Secretary, 108 Wentworth Road, Barnet, EN5 4NU

At time of writing, we have 338 households with 420 fully paid-up members.