



protecting and improving the environment

# ***Newsletter 151***

December 2011



***Inside:  
WHERE ARE WE WITH THE TRAM ?***

## EDITORIAL

Many of you missed taking the opportunity to directly influence the future direction of the Society by not responding to the Questionnaire which had been included with the August Newsletter. On page 10 of this Newsletter there is a brief summary of the responses that have been received. Beeston will be undergoing very very significant changes over the next few years, starting with the Tram (see the article below) so you are strongly urged to consider, and positively respond to, the message on page 9 from our Acting Chairman - if the Society is to continue to have an influence, it needs YOU.

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## WHERE ARE WE WITH THE TRAM ?

For a long time, opinion in Beeston and Chilwell has been divided on the subject of the tram. Rival campaign groups started; keen tram advocates became members of BACIT whilst opponents joined BCBRA. Debate became heated. Supporters of the tram were seen by some as "anoraks" who liked nothing better than to play with their train sets. Conversely, the charge of "Nimbyism" was levelled at tram opponents. Each side had expert supporters with impressive letters after their name. Like economists, the experts disagreed. (In fact there were sub-groups in each camp: some pro-tram people would have preferred a different route, perhaps along Broadgate into Beeston town centre, whilst some on the other side argued for a Derby Road route direct from Bardills to Nottingham).



And why were they arguing? Because the opponents of the tram do not agree that it will bring the benefits claimed for it: an integrated bus and tram system, a redeveloped town centre, fast links to Nottingham, the potential for Beeston shops to be accessible to more shoppers and a reduction in car journeys.

The public inquiry, held to adjudicate the matter, and the independent inspector decided in favour of the tram, and also the route as originally proposed.

There was probably a third group which wasn't fussed either way but became amazed at the long-drawn out process which so far has seen no tracks put down. In fact this "project creep" became the only thing that united the pro and anti factions. All agreed that anxiety and

uncertainty had been created as the decision to proceed or not was pushed back because of complicated discussions between City and County Councils, the Government and NET. The picture was further confused by the Conservative victory in the County Council elections of 2009 which saw the new ruling group pull out of promoting the tram, leaving Labour-controlled Nottingham City Council to go on alone. Ironically, after the General Election of 2010, it was the Conservatives at Westminster who having signed a Coalition Agreement with the Liberal Democrats which specifically favoured the development of light rail schemes. This led to NET Phase Two (Lines 2 and 3) getting the government green light.

There was still the problem of who was going to build the tram. Two bids were made and earlier this year Tramlink Nottingham was chosen as the preferred bidder to design and build the tram extension and take over the operation of NET Line One once the contract was signed. It is expected (at the time of writing) that the transfer from Arrow Light Rail Limited to Tramlink will be shortly concluded, after which construction will commence, early next year. Which is where we are now.



It is anticipated that the trams will be running by late 2014, following a three year construction period, which will include a period of trialling the trams without passengers. During this time there will be a lot of inconvenience to both businesses and residents. Chilwell Road, where trams will run "on-street", will present particular problems, including the demolition of some houses and commercial properties mainly on the south side and interruption of business. Discussions on compensation with those affected are already underway. Businesses will be able to apply for financial assistance. Compensation for the latter will be based on proven loss of turnover.

Some parts of the construction process will need great sensitivity. There will be works at Neville Sadler Court, and residents at Richmond Court and Sandby Court have expressed their concerns



about the proximity of the tram route. When we were councillors for Beeston West, in addition to a Community Action Team (CAT) meeting devoted to the implications of the tram, my colleague Graham Hopcroft and I arranged a meeting at Richmond Court between residents and NET



representatives. Whilst some were still not particularly happy with the tram, it was clear that several misunderstandings were cleared up which eased some misapprehensions. Thus it is important that the Liaison Groups, which NET promise to establish, effectively communicate with residents. Councillors will need to play their role and it is good to know that our successors held a well-attended CAT meeting with NET representation recently.

A few points of interest: it is anticipated that track laying itself won't take place until autumn 2012 (Beeston town centre) and then done in stages (2013 for Chilwell Road and behind Richmond Court). Before



that, utilities have to be dealt with, culverts redirected, vegetation cleared; due regard will be paid to birds' nesting habits in March. Tramlink

intends to use local suppliers when at all possible.

Passions can still be inflamed. Yet, when told that, "If you don't live on the proposed route you haven't the right to an opinion," I was taken by surprise. Following that logic, only those directly affected by a proposal can have a say on anything, be it a new motorway, high speed train etc. Only those who have children can have a view on education. Only those who are robbed can speak with validity on crime. This clearly cannot be right – we all have the right to express a view on matters of public finance to which we contribute through our taxes. Nevertheless, the above exchange shows that it is important for

tram supporters to recognize the inconvenience that some will suffer for the perceived greater good.

Detailed information can be found online at [www.netphasetwo.com](http://www.netphasetwo.com)

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

As acting Chairman, Tony Krarup has guided the Beeston and District Civic Society through a lively year of activity. We have been delighted to welcome Brian Loughborough on to the Committee this year and value his ready and wise contributions to the Society’s work.

Registered Membership of the Society stands at 196 and our monthly meetings on local matters, normally held in Beeston Library (from October2010-March2011), have been well attended and have stimulated interesting exchanges of views.

**Public Profile**

The Society has been actively involved in a number of local events this year. In Cooperation with the Beeston and District Local History Society, Stapleford and District Local History Society and the Bramcote Conservation Society, eight **Blue Plaques** have now been installed in recognition of noteworthy persons and places of historic interest in the area. Other installations are in preparation.

Members of the Committee played a major part in the planning and organisation of September’s **Heritage Open Days** celebrations. The range of activities was even greater this year and the feedback extremely positive.

**Beeston Carnival** presented another opportunity to involve the Society in local celebrations and our stall was laid out early and manned by members throughout the day.

**Guided walks** in our area continue to be greatly valued and we are especially grateful to Robin Phillips and Professor Beckett for their organisation and leadership.

**Local Concerns**

The Planning Subcommittee continue to be watchful of applications coming before Broxtowe Borough Council. There is active interest in the **Chilwell Conservation Area** proposals. We have opposed the application for the demolition of the old cottage (343 High road) and hope that it will be included in the Chilwell Conservation Area review proposal under consideration.

The Borough Council has been approached on the subject of **Trees** - their retention, preservation and planting and replacement in the area. The Council have informed us of their current plans and we are following up their expressed wish for this Society to be involved in future decision-making.

Members of this Society's Committee continue to participate in meetings of the newly named **BID** (formerly Beeston Business Forum). Concern about the state of the **Ten Bell** and surrounding vicinity triggered an approach to Sainsbury's management with whom some of the responsibility lies. A helpful response was followed by an immediate effort by the firm to clean up the area. We hope that contact with the Borough Estates Department will lead to a more imaginative and permanent improvement to the area concerned.

Committee members have also been involved in discussion of plans for landscaping the Parish **Churchyard** and have submitted their views on the University's **Wind Turbines** proposal

The Government's revised planning policy has refocused interest on local **building development** applications and the Committee have submitted their views on sites likely to come under early consideration. We maintain the view that first consideration should be given to use of suitable 'Brown Field' sites.

The Committee are very aware that further major development issues will soon arise concerning the advent of the Tram and the Henry Boot proposals for redevelopment of Beeston centre. We continue to take part in the **Highfields** Users Committee and welcome the improvements made to Highfield Park and Play Area this year.

News and ideas from other regions in the East Midlands come to us through attendance at EMACHS' meetings and receipt of their journal. Through this society membership we also learn of any National concerns reported by CIVIC VOICE.

## **Publications**

David Lovesy has undertaken Editorship of the Society's Newsletter this year with enthusiasm and expertise. We congratulate him on the improved and prompt production of four lively publications. It is encouraging to record that our members are responding to articles,

notices and queries in the Newsletter and we seek to encourage such participation in the Society's affairs.

Newly designed Membership Leaflets are available and the publication group is working on a revised edition Of the Beeston Heritage Trail pamphlet.

Copies of the Society's postcards and greeting cards are available at Meetings and in the local stationery outlets.

Your Committee have worked conscientiously throughout the year to conserve and, hopefully, improve the environment in which we live and are seeking new active members to assist in their endeavours. We would encourage interested volunteers to make themselves known to our Secretary, Eileen Atherton, or to any other Member of the Committee they may know.

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## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS

Notes	2010-11	2009-10
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Members subscriptions	<b>1,174.00</b>	1,167.00
Tax rebate	<b>259.00</b>	222.01
Bank interest less charges	<b>7.46</b>	7.36
Donations	<b>809.00</b>	820.00
Blue Plaques	<b>785.00</b>	0.00
1 Sale of publications	<b>328.70</b>	649.00
Entrance fees	<b>90.00</b>	44.00
Other income	<b>9.50</b>	62.00
Total	<b>3,462.66</b>	2,971.37
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Newsletter	<b>301.44</b>	345.87
Committee work and administration	<b>231.13</b>	304.97
Subscriptions and grants to other bodies	<b>24.00</b>	310.55
Meetings	<b>114.40</b>	112.00
Heritage open day publicity	<b>677.00</b>	810.00
1 Cost of publications sold	<b>182.02</b>	365.54

Blue Plaques	<b>951.54</b>	0.00
Other expenses	<b>204.20</b>	110.89
Total	<b>2,685.73</b>	2,359.82

Surplus/deficit for the year	<b>776.93</b>	611.55
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### **BALANCE SHEETS At 31st August**

	<b><u>2010-11</u></b>	<b><u>2009-10</u></b>
<b>Assets</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
CAF Gold Fund	<b>3,733.22</b>	3,725.76
Bank current account	<b>1,307.12</b>	561.04
Cash in hand	<b>0.00</b>	0.00
1 Stock in hand	<b>783.90</b>	844.72
2 Debtors	<b>1,055.00</b>	910.95
Total assets	<b>6,879.24</b>	6,042.47

### **Liabilities**

Opening accumulated funds	<b>5,387.11</b>	4,771.56
Advance subscriptions carried forward	<b>0.00</b>	4.00
Surplus/deficit for year	<b>776.93</b>	611.55
Closing accumulated funds	<b>6,164.04</b>	5,387.11
3 Creditors	<b>715.20</b>	655.36
Total liabilities	<b>6,879.24</b>	6,042.47

### **Notes**

	<b><u>2010-11</u></b>	<b><u>2009-10</u></b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>note 1 - Publications account</b>		
Opening stock at cost	<b>844.72</b>	482.94
Purchases	<b>121.20</b>	727.32
Sub total	<b>965.92</b>	1,210.26
Sales in year at cost	<b>-182.02</b>	-365.54
Closing stock at cost	<b>783.90</b>	844.72
Sales during the year	<b>328.70</b>	649.00



Cost of sales in year	<b>-182.02</b>	-365.54
Profit for the year on publications	<b>146.68</b>	283.46

## note 2 - Debtors

Heritage open day support	<b>800.00</b>	810.00
Blue Plaques	<b>125.00</b>	
Other debtors	<b>130.00</b>	100.95
	<b>1,055.00</b>	910.95

## note 3 - Creditors

Heritage open day publicity	<b>531.00</b>	590.00
Other creditors	<b>184.20</b>	65.36
	<b>715.20</b>	655.36

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## COMMITTEE NEWS

**A message from our Acting Chairman:** At the AGM, Eileen Atherton, Mick Atherton, Jean Cameron, Tony Krarup, Brian Loughbrough, Dave Lovesy, Caroline Penn, Peter Robinson and Barbara Selwood were again re-elected to an unchanged executive Committee. We did not get any new blood coming forward and you should be aware that some have advised that they do not wish to continue after the present year. So - we are looking to introduce now some new younger blood to assist us in running your Society. We are particularly in need of; **a treasurer, a web- master, a news letter editor, a walks coordinator and a meetings secretary.** We also have smaller groups that need new support, such as **Blue Plaques, Trees, Support for making the Beeston Maltings a listed building, Reviewing the Conservation Areas.** So why not join one today. Also help us to get "new blood" by giving new Membership as a gift to the younger members of your family and friends.

### Blue Plaques

In September we unveiled a plaque to the **Rev Dr John Clifford**, 1836 – 1923, who was baptised and preached his first sermon in what is now the Church House Nursery, formerly the General Baptist Chapel on Nether Street, Beeston.

In October, on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, a plaque to **Bendigo**, the all England champion bare-knuckle prize-fighter, was unveiled by Jason Booth, at that time British and Commonwealth super



bantamweight champion. It was fixed close to the site of the Wollaton Road cottage where he died in Beeston in 1880.

In November a plaque to **Edward Joseph Lowe**, 1825-1900, was unveiled on the boundary wall to Broadgate House at 72 Broadgate. Lowe, an astronomer, botanist, founder member of the Meteorological



Society and Fellow of the Royal Society, built Broadgate House as his home and observatory in the 1850s. This was our tenth plaque.

Others currently under discussion are **Thomas Robert Malthus**, Bramcote; **St John's School** and **Wesleyan Chapel**, Stapleford; **Richard Beckinsale**, actor, Chilwell; two plaques commemorating the **Chilwell Explosion**, (one at Orchard Cottage and another in the Churchyard of St Mary's Attenborough); **West End House**, Beeston; **Colonel BD Shaw**, explosives expert, Beeston; and **Pearson and the Beeston Lads Club**.

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## MEMBERS NEWS

From the **Questionnaire returns** that we have had, you seem to be particularly satisfied with the way we deal with; PLANNING APPLICATIONS "Important job of Civic Society", PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREAS and BLUE PLAQUES "Another excellent example of good work for community", HERITAGE OPEN DAYS "Brilliant!", PUBLIC SPEAKER MEETINGS "Usually an interesting programme", QUARTERLY MEMBERS NEWSLETTER "Very interesting" and WEBSITE "very impressive".

You were more uncertain about our CAMPAIGNS "Not sure what the Society stance actually is", GUIDED WALKS "Less history more Civic Society" PUBLICATIONS "Never bought any"

There were also suggestions about "Web based forum – for discussions.", "Tweets from Society", "Facebook page", "volunteer events", "Sharper Display stands at events".

To act upon the above we do need your active participation so **please respond to the message under Committee News (page 9)**.

We are saddened by the news that Dr Margaret Colley a long standing member, initially with her husband, lost her own battle against cancer. There will be a private funeral in Suffolk, where she had been living, but a memorial event (where everyone will be welcome to attend) will be organised early next year in Bramcote where she had been the village GP for 35 years. Dr Colley established a web site @ [www.margaretcolley.co.uk](http://www.margaretcolley.co.uk) to reflect back on her life.

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## EVENTS

Our next three **Public Speaker Presentations**, all in the upstairs Meeting Room at Beeston Public Library, Foster Avenue, now **starting at 7.15 p.m.**, are:

Friday 13th January 2012

**Major Wright**, Chilwell MOD

**'Military Matters'**

Friday 10th February 2012

**Edwina Woodland**, Severn Trent Water Ltd

**Education Co-Ordinator**

Friday 9th March 2012

**Ioan Read Aspley**, Nottingham City

**'A Further Update on the NET Phase 2 Development'**

The 2012 programme for our **Guided Walks** is now being finalised, all to be led by **Professor John Beckett**:

Thursday JUNE 14<sup>th</sup> 2012 7:00pm

**Chilwell Village**

Thursday JULY 5<sup>th</sup> 2012 7:00pm

**Beeston West End**

Sunday SEPTEMBER 9th 2012 2:30pm

**Beeston Central Core for "beginners"**

Our Secretary's "recollections" of the **Heritage Open Days** Weekend 2011 can be found on our web site @ [www.beestoncivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.beestoncivicsociety.org.uk)

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**A LOCAL ARCHITECTS EXPERIENCE WITH THE PLANNING SYSTEM**, a talk given by Julian Owen, MBE. RIBA. FRSA. On 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Architects and Planners are often said to be in opposition to each other, although 96% of 'first-time' planning applications are actually successful. However, the tendency in the United Kingdom can be to leave things as they are, and a recent poll indicates that the number of people campaigning against developments



has grown by 5%. The survey also showed that 29% of those questioned had actively opposed some form of development in their area. New private housing was the main target, accounting for over half of all projects opposed. Meanwhile, the proportion of people who campaigned in favour of extra housing fell to just 18%. Overall, opposition to developments in general (Nimbys) plateaued at 85%.

Much of the architects work is in the addition of extensions, or altering the design, of existing buildings. Such was the case in a recent exercise on a house in Kimberley. The architect drawings were submitted, for approval, to the local planning office, but were rejected on the grounds that they contravened the 'local plan' with reference to an increase in the volume of the building. A model was then submitted that clearly showed that the design enhanced the appearance of the dwelling. The application was again refused on the same grounds. A further model was designed to conform to the volume requirements of the local plan. This involved the reduction of roof space by the introduction of 'flat' roofing, clearly not acceptable.

There are many grounds on which objections to developments are made. But there could not possibly, be one more bizarre than the example of 'Fairies Rock'. On a site in the U.K., the bulldozers were halted when a neighbour claimed that a rock could not be moved, as it would 'kill the fairies'. The Community Council Chairwoman was even reported as saying that she believed in fairies but could not be sure that they lived under that particular rock. Planning guidance does state that 'local customs and beliefs must be taken into account when a developer applies for planning permission.

No such objections were raised to a proposal for the development of a site for housing on Middleton Crescent, on the Beeston / Wollaton border. However, the original planning application had been refused on the grounds that the density of the housing would be too high. Mr. Owen was invited by the Housing Developer to prepare a low-density design that would be acceptable to the Planners and the client. His response was to propose a design with many interesting features including, maintaining the varying gradients of the site, more green space, and individually designed properties. The clients and Planners alike accepted the end result enthusiastically, and the Nottingham City Council granted permission to allow access to the site at Wollaton. However, the proposal was deferred at the request of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust for further investigations. Following even further delays, the plan was finally accepted but by that time the Housing Developer had withdrawn and the client was unable to continue with the proposal.



New legislation – ‘The Green Agenda’ - is soon to be introduced which will directly affect planning and building regulations in conservation areas. Designs may change to cater for regulations to conserve energy, and to generate energy. Solar Panels may be introduced and, perhaps, windows may be reduced in size to prevent heat/energy from escaping

In July 2011 a report by the Self Build Government – Industry Working Group produced an Action Plan to promote Self Build Housing, inc:

- Actively enable more self build.
- Many small additions, fewer ‘mega’ developments.
- Pro-active development plans created by Local Authorities with more community involvement. Localism?
- Experienced architects or design review panels to advise Development Control Offices and Committees.
- Better training for Planning Committee members.
- ‘Planning free’ zones. i.e. with broader based rules.

Julian Owen is also a Trustee of the Canalside Heritage Centre and is involved as an architect in a proposed project at the ‘Beeston Cut’. The Cut is a small but important link between the Nottingham Canal and the River Trent, with a rich history and place in the hearts of the local community. The disused cottages (circa 1796) adjacent to the lock

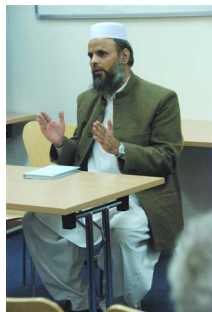
house are important and historic buildings on the canal, and a groundswell of interest has emerged to see them returned to their former glory for the benefit of the community. It is on this basis that the 'Canalside Heritage Centre Trust' is currently preparing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore and adapt the cottages to provide a Heritage Centre that will attract, inform and educate current and future generations about the historical significance of this unique region. Whereas the front of the cottages will be kept as close to the original as possible, the rears will be sympathetically extended to house toilets and lifts to the upper floors of the cottages. Outside there will be an area which will overlook the river, an allotment for local schools and may include cycle hire, a fishing tackle shop and a kitchen.

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**A MUSLIM IN BEESTON**, a talk given jointly by Ghulam Maya-ud-din and Ismail, on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Ghulam, is the co-founder of the Beeston Muslim Centre congregation and in 2010 was made a freeman of the Borough. He is aware how some people find Arabic names difficult so he is perfectly happy to be simply called Mr Din.



Ismail, an Imam (or scholar) from Nottingham, spoke first, and emphasised the important place occupied by the Creator God, who gives us our way of life. Muslims have a high regard for all of the prophets, of whom Muhammad is regarded as the most important. Any religion must meet the needs of the people at all times. It is our duty to find out answers to problems, and to live in peace. The holy books have been sent to us for our

guidance; they do not have any expiry date. Islam is a faith that applies to all areas of the world. Someone following Islam can feel perfectly comfortable in western society. The Islamic religious guidelines are rather like the Highway Code, we should try to abide by the guidelines and live in the hope of Mercy. It is best to ignore the hostile spin that the media sometimes put on their reporting of Islam. It is better if we concentrate on the duty of neighbourliness, which should be as natural to us as breathing, so that we all live like one family.



A lively session of questions followed, answered by the two speakers together. It is argued that wearing the **niqab** was not actually required by any command in the Qur'an, however, all Muslims agree wearing the Hijab and dressing modestly is required. **Friday prayers** were used as an occasion when the imam at a mosque could instruct the members and teach them more about their faith. Among other duties an **imam (or scholar)** acts like a sort of spokesperson for the mosque. **Prayer-times during the day** were fairly flexible, but at certain times in the year difficulties can arise with the restrictions imposed by planning regulations. Islam does not in any way condone atrocities or terrorism, and teaches that all should be kind to their neighbours. For Muslims, Islam has the answer to the 'problem of evil', that is peace and patience, they believe there is a greater purpose behind everything. Altogether we had a most interesting and instructive evening. Next Year the Heritage Open Days will provide an opportunity for non-Muslims to visit the Evelyn Street mosque.

RP

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HIGHFIELDS ?

I have been representing the Society on the Highfields User Committee for two years now, and the answer to the above question is "quite a lot". October 26<sup>th</sup> was the official opening of the newly refurbished

children's playground by Councillor David Trimble of Nottingham City Council. As it was half term, there were activities and games for the children, as well as The Model Boat Club, which is based at Highfields, displaying some of their boats. Councillor Trimble, who represents Dunkirk and Lenton ward, is the portfolio



holder for Leisure, Culture and Tourism. Over forty park areas have been refurbished over the past four years across the city and Councillor Trimble is justifiably proud of his record and especially of Highfields. Funding for this play area refurbishment was secured from Section 106 monies, from area 8 Area Capital funding, Councillor budgets and the parks development budget. I mention these funds to give you an idea of all the sources that are explored to obtain money to enhance and improve local facilities.

Recently lottery funding has been granted to develop and refurbish the Forest Recreation ground and the next application to be submitted by the Nottingham City Council will be in respect of Highfields Park. The application is presently in the preparation stage, but an "Expression of Interest" has been submitted. So hopefully the park will be tidied and redeveloped in the not too distant future. Among the planned improvements are: de-silting the lake (a major and expensive undertaking), improved paths, signage and park furniture, tidying and replanting of trees and shrubs and pruning and generally improving the rhododendrons – again, long overdue, but expensive.

Much work has already been done, with the help of "Payback Teams" (those sentenced to community service by the courts) and an excellent job they have done so far, helping to repair and replant the cascade area and building a wooden bridge across the stream. Other replanting and pruning has already been done and the park has generally looked much better this summer. Some members of the teams enjoyed the work so much that they continue the work after their sentences are completed. They and the regular park team are to be congratulated on what has been achieved so far.

The paddling pool area, often described as an eyesore, looks so much better from inside the park than from the bus or car - it is the fencing around it that looks awful. A number of options are being considered for its future, including a water feature and a wildlife area; it certainly has not been forgotten.

Apart from the Model Boat Club using the lake, we have a thriving Nottingham Croquet Club and the Beeston Hockey Club, both winning national and international titles, and the busy tennis centre. That side of Highfields will, of course, be affected by the building of the tramway.

As if all that is not enough we are also lucky to have the Lakeside Arts Centre, with excellent concert, exhibition and food facilities.

The putting green and the rowing boats were back this summer and, joy of joys - the Maid Marian has been located. For those of you not old enough to remember the excitement of a trip around the lake in a pleasure steamer, that is indeed a joy to look forward to – if it can be repaired one day! Highfields Park is still there to be used by all of us and I hope you will support the lottery bid.

JB

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## THAT EYESORE ON CHILWELL ROAD



The number of times over the last twenty years I have been stopped in the street by someone concerned about the old house at no.20 Chilwell Road. 'What is happening to that dreadful eyesore? It's been empty for ages, and the front garden looks a right mess!'. Well, it has finally been dismantled and is being rebuilt.

It was built by Mr Charles Brailsford as a home for himself and his wife Constance, in the 1930s. It may be that Brailsford Road in Dunkirk is named after his firm, Brailsford & Pigott, and built by him or his father. No.1 Devonshire Avenue, originally the home (and surgery) of Dr Hezekiah Barbash, had already by that time become 'Challenge House', a Red Cross home for people who could not look after themselves. It was still a surgery, because Noëline McCoach and her partners continued to rent some rooms there until their new building, 'The Manor Surgery', was opened in 1985 next to the vicarage

Shortly after Mr Brailsford died, and the local management of the British Red Cross bought no.20 Chilwell Road, hoping to expand and use it as further accommodation for their residents. This hope was never realised. It became a store for their old furniture, and a trap for a neighbour's inquisitive siamese cat (who fortunately survived). In general it was left unused and a millstone round their necks.

Meanwhile, in July 1993 the whole of the St. John's Grove estate became a conservation area, and the government revised the space and design standards which Social Services require from care homes. At a national level the British Red Cross then reviewed its operations, and decided that small locally-managed units like Challenge House was outside their core business, and they tried to dispose of the unit. As a result of long-drawn-out discussions between Social Services and planning and conservation staff, a complete refurbishment or rebuilding of the premises was agreed, and ownership was transferred from the Red Cross to Heritage Care. The residents have moved out temporarily, and on 12th September 2011 the work at last began. Two one-storey extensions have been demolished (they will be re-built); Mr Brailsford's house has been dismantled and will be re-built to the

appropriate standard; by the time the residents return the internal spaces of no.1 Devonshire and no.20 Chilwell Road will all be properly suited to their needs, and the front garden areas and boundaries will be properly in keeping with the conservation area. The 'eyesore' will be inhabited again after a quarter-century of neglect, and will be serving a worth-while function.

RP

## TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Having attended several of the blue plaque unveilings, including the most recent to Bendigo, I think it is time all those involved in bringing it to fruition were publicly congratulated. The Blue Plaques Committee formed by the societies involved – The Beeston & District Civic Society, the Beeston and District Local History Society, the Stapleford Local History Society and more recently the Bramcote Conservation Society has done a tremendous job in researching those commemorated, designing and obtaining the plaques and finding the funding.

Also, arranging the various unveiling ceremonies has been a major feat, in some cases, I understand, fraught with difficulties. Those ceremonies I have attended have all been excellent, although I am sorry to have missed the one in Stapleford to Sir John Borlase Warren; it sounded quite spectacular.

We have had it in mind for a long time to erect plaques to local worthies and since it is no longer sponsored at national level, it is good to see what has been achieved by co-operation between these like minded civic amenity groups. Long may it continue!

Joyce Brown

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Dear Editor

We all know of Marion Wallwork's keen interest in trees, as exemplified by her contribution to this newsletter.

It does rather focus on those which have disappeared and I would like to applaud those which remain. The area where Marion lives is indeed favoured by the tree population which it enjoys which many others might wish to have, but Imperial Road and Bramcote road at it's lower end are both made more attractive by those trees which they have, Mention is made of a meeting to be held this month, and I would like to bring to the society's attention two subjects which you might wish to include in these discussions.

1 The tram the pictures in the brochure which Net has produced in the past include several road side trees notably in the parking area to be

created on Chilwell Road. The Civic Society would do well to ensure that these happen, and there may be other opportunities for planting which arise from this development.

2 Park Road is now part of a conservation area for what this is worth. I have been attempting to engage the interest in the Borough Tree Man, a Mr Woods ! (so far without tangible effect) in trimming of overhanging hedges which constitute a hazard to pedestrian on this road. Also I occasionally walk down Vincent Avenue towards the river, and the hedges down there are so neglected that it is impossible for two people to walk side by side on the footpath. Perhaps the Civic Society might have more influence than a simple council tax payer in securing action.

I attach a picture or two to illustrate my point. One example demonstrates how the householder although trimming the hedge, has allowed even encouraged it to overhang the footpath possibly to discourage pedestrians from walking up this side of the road?.



Bill Hall

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**PS; Trees:** Members will be pleased to know that Broxtowe Council has sought our cooperation in a serious move to improve the local treescape, both by replacing some of the lost trees and by many new plantings for which government money is available. Happily the Council's newly appointed Tree Warden has already met with Society representatives, prompted by the letters from Marion Wallwork published in our last Newsletter. They are now seeking help from you all by identifying locations where tree replacements, remedial work or new plantings might take place. If you can help in this way **please send detailed information** to the Society's Secretary (see page 20 for address).

Note that some of the official responsibility for this arboreal work has now passed to the County Council but the efficient implementation of the current scheme in our area will be greatly helped by our local knowledge, so please help now as planning is already in progress.

JC

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## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual authors and not the official stance of Beeston and District Civic Society unless explicitly stated.

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