



PEMBURY MATTERS

The Pembury Society Newsletter Spring 2017

Dear Members,

Our coming meeting is on Wednesday 26th April, at 7.45 pm, in St. Peter's Upper Church, when we have George Pargeter, Project Director of Balfour Beatty, speaking on

“Catch 21 – the A21 Pembury to Tonbridge Dualling Project”.



No doubt all of us have had a moan about this, but will in due course be very grateful, as we see the final sections being completed. It's easy to forget the years of campaigning before the work started, and the delays as we met the traffic jams, but the end is in sight. The bridges are now visible and the roundabouts imaginable. What a change in the scenery and the moving of tons of earth, let alone felling of trees. Did the bats show themselves? What about the asbestos? And concrete from France not strong enough for the bridges – or is this a myth? All will be revealed on 26th April. George will be bringing pictures of the project and it will no doubt be a fascinating evening. It will be followed by our usual Question and Answer time. Do bring your questions!

Rather than have a one-off exhibition, we decided that at each meeting of the Society we would have a display or a short “extra” item of historical interest. At this meeting we are displaying maps specifically focused on the main London - Hastings road through Pembury, a retrospective look at the road that would in due course become the A21.

Members and non-members welcome. (non-members £3 which enables you to join the Society).

If you have anything interesting to show, local artefacts or whatever, do get in touch with me so we can explore how they can be shown. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 26th April.

David Hanes - Chairman

Comments from our Membership Secretary:

We currently have around 400 members, in approximately 240 properties, but would obviously love to have more, so if you have friends or neighbours who like yourselves care about our village, please encourage them to come along to one of our enrolment days and join the Society.

Our membership subs are due now for the year (£3 individual, £5 family), and as last year I will be at the Bowls Club on these days for enrolment, (or alternatively bring your sub when coming to the meeting on 26th April): **Friday March 31st, Saturday April 1st, Sunday April 2nd and Monday April 3rd, from 10am to 1pm.** For those who have never been to the Bowls Club before, it is situated next to the Recreation Ground and the Parish Council Office. Parking should not be a problem, as there is a large car park.

Please do try to come along, as it is nice to put faces to names and have a chat. We would also welcome any comments and ideas that may help the village be a nicer place to live. If you missed the enrolment days, just come to the meeting on the 26th April, when we shall also be pleased to receive your sub!

Mick Castle - Membership Secretary

Planning Officer's report:

In the six months since our last newsletter nothing new has arisen on the planning front that we have considered to be contentious. Apart from the usual glut of winter applications for pruning trees with preservation orders, the majority of other applications have been for extensions to residential properties which are generally uncontroversial.

There have been a couple of applications for what could be seen as 'garden grabbing' but, because of current government policy and the need for new homes, this is a battle we have had to accept defeat on unless there are overwhelming reasons for objecting. Both applications were approved and, apart from the effect on the immediate neighbours, there is unlikely to be any detrimental effect to the community as a whole.

We are aware that Cornford House are planning to double their capacity and are waiting for the application to appear in the public domain before considering our response.

As far as the three on-going controversial applications are concerned I can report as follows:

1) Owlsnest Wood

Apart from a very recent letter from the local hospital trust to the planners supporting the scheme for a care home, there has been nothing in the public domain since last May. This has now been dragging on for nearly two years and I am sure there is a lot going on in secret behind closed doors.

2) 3 High Street – the old garage site

The proposal to build a four storey block of flats on the site was refused in committee, it went to appeal and the planning inspector in Bristol also refused it. The underlying reason was that you cannot replace one bad building with another that is unsuitable, which is what we said all along. There is no question that the site needs re-developing, but with something sympathetic to the area.

3) Land to rear 94-98 Henwood Green Rd

After several attempts to put houses on this site this application was refused in committee and it too went to appeal. Again the inspector in Bristol disallowed the application on the grounds that it would be too detrimental to the adjoining properties in Heskett Park. Since then an application for two bungalows has been submitted and approved, despite not really addressing the main problems anticipated by any building on this site. This is again proof that, at the end of the day, 'garden grabbing' is acceptable in planning terms.

N.B

One important point has come to light. The Planning Department are no longer going to advise immediate neighbours of planning applications in their area. Hopefully your neighbours will tell you about any building plans they may have but, if not, the only way you will learn about their intentions is if you keep an eye on the planning web site. This seems to us to be undemocratic. How can you exercise your right to object to an application that you feel is unacceptable if you are unaware of it? Because of this controversial applications may well slip through unopposed because the applicant kept quiet and no-one noticed them in time.

Kathryn Franklin - Planning Officer

Current Committee

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FOCUS ON COMMITTEE MEMBERS – Tony Nicholls

Did you know about the Pembury historical web site? I have asked Tony Nicholls to share with us how this came into being....

David Hanes

One evening when having a quiet meal with my wife in the Black Horse, the peace was broken by an excited pack of drinkers having migrated up from the Royal Oak. This was their meeting to discuss worries over the closure of their favourite watering hole. The following week they were still there, still bleating on about the demise of this ancient and much loved pub. I soon found out that there had been many other pubs in Pembury and embarked on some light research. The result was a list of about 10 establishments and a map showing their locations. I sent my findings to Steve Morton and they were placed on the history section of the Pembury Village web site.

I soon realized that over the years there must have been many shops and retail businesses that had come and gone without any true record of their existence. I decided to investigate and make a chronological record of as many Pembury retail outlets as I could find. I put this proposal to Steve Morton for inclusion on the Pembury web site, and we had quite a few discussions as to how this should be managed. The upshot was a brand new web site for the History of Pembury – all existing history material would be transferred across and I would have responsibility for populating it with content. I do not claim to be a historian – I like to dabble with topics that interest me. The true experts like Kathryn Franklin and Richard Snow have been writing their history pieces for years and much of it is there in the archived PVNs. I am trying to create lists and links to all these ancient writings gathering dust in the archives. I am using the history web site as a marshalling yard for whatever information comes to hand – from anyone or anywhere – all contributions welcome. The web site soon found visitors and ex-Pembury folk from all over the world offering their stories and photos. It is a work in progress. In places it lacks structure and sometimes things get shunted around, but it's a starting point for storing the many, many fragments of data that make up the history of this village.

One of my passions is maps – antique maps – the sort of things that featured dragons and sea monsters. I have a small internet business selling such stuff to collectors and enthusiasts. I also have a reasonable collection of old maps that feature Pembury and I will be using these to promote historical interest of our neighbourhood. I have managed to keep a low profile running the history material but on reading of a proposed map for the village green I ventured out to attend a Pembury Society meeting. I was hoping to be an anonymous onlooker, but a few people recognised my name from the history web site and pounced on me. I have since been conscripted into the Pembury Society to help promote history matters.

There you have it – a potted history of the new web site – spawned by the demise of the Royal Oak. For further enlightenment please visit.....www.pembury.org/history

PS – can you encourage friends to join the society or advertise the meeting, using the poster overleaf? Thank you

The Pembury Society



Wed 26th April

St Peter's Church, Hastings Road at 7.45pm

“CATCH 21”

THE A21 DUALLING PROJECT

Guest Speaker

GEORGE PARGETER

Project Director Balfour Beatty

Open to members and non-members. £3.00 admission for non-members.