

The Island NEWS

July-August 2021

Within the new Syon Park Garden Centre

NEWS is issued to all residents of Brentford Lock Island on behalf of **BLIRA**, Brentford Lock Island Residents Association Ltd. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Board.

Editors: Les Brown and Ellen Cantor

Summer at last, and we are back where we were around this time last year, with lockdown being eased, shops and gyms reopening and being able to meet again outside. This time there's more realistic optimism, thanks to the (mainly) sunnier days and signs of new life around us, but especially due to the game-changing protection of the Covid vaccines. But we need to be aware that health experts advise continuing caution: hand-cleansing, social distancing (within reason) and even mask-wearing may have to be with us for some time yet. Stay safe, stay well.

BLIRA: News from the Board

See the Board Minutes in full on the website: they are published monthly.

Highlights from the meeting on 22nd June:

- In preparation for their September stand-down, it was agreed that some duties currently undertaken by BLIRA's long-established co-Chairmen will transfer to MR&Co. the Island's Property Managers.
- The Annual letter to shareholders was approved and was due to be sent out with the approved accounts for 2019-2020.
- It was noted that the gate to the Underground Car Park has been damaged again - the responsible party is being pursued for the costs of repair.
- Work on the bin enclosures and pergolas is now complete, and much admired.
- When Covid guidelines are finally relaxed, a date will be set for an informal AGM/social event.
- A full Concierge office service (including parcel storage) will resume when guidelines allow.

Next Board Meeting: 20 July 2021

Social committee



*Sunday Market on 13 June:
photo by Orhideea Rosu*

Our first outing in a year, an al-fresco get-together on Saturday 22 May, was well attended, despite drab weather. Snacks were provided by the Social Committee to

supplement BYO drinks, and it was a lively meet of old friends and a bumper number of new residents.

Then on 13 June, Island craftspeople took part in a bustling Sunday Market in Market Place. Great weather produced record attendance, and artists Jackie Richards, Lou Hamilton and Nic Cantor were pleased with the trade. The Social Committee sponsors our participation, so please let us know if you would like to take part in this monthly event.

Coming up: **FREE and FESTIVE:** Our annual Barbecue will be on **Sat. 31 July** at 5:30 pm, outside Moorings House. All the usual sausage and Pimms, salads and desserts will be back. To celebrate the end of lockdown, the Social Committee is offering this event **FREE** to Island residents, but you must sign up for tickets in advance, at the Concierge Office. Watch for posters and more information.

Plucky, lucky Foxy

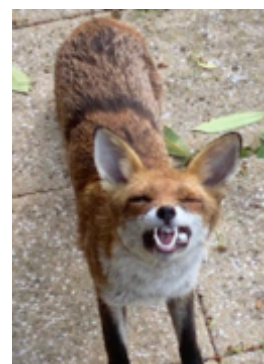
Andrew Mitchell reports:

In February 2021 I spotted a young (about 2 years old) vixen regularly around our area, in a wretched state.

Full of mange, she had scratched every inch she could get to - manically - not only on her back and middle but also neck and haunches, and down to the bone on the tail. She was bleeding and infectious from so much scratching. Deciding to try and save her - now named "Foxy" by me - I managed to get several powerful anti-mange injections, a 10-day antibiotic course plus worming and de-fleaing tablets (don't ask where from!) - and got them into her over a 2-3 week period. As well as some decent grub, small choc swiss rolls go down nicely. Her face says it all, as the "after" photo shows. She has now become quite friendly, and will come when I clap. We sit one or two metres apart, quite calmly. Sometimes she simply wants to play with the cats in the area, apparently without evil intent - our cats are happy to sit along with her, though at a respectable distance! By June she showed terrific progress. Whatever personal feelings you have about urban foxes, this has to be a happy outcome!



*"Foxy": before (L) and after (R)
Andrew's intervention*



The Island's Names

With **THE ISLAND** about to be displayed over the entrance arch, we look at the origins of the names here.

Moorings House is an obvious one, with boat moorings outside, and the **Mill Houses** are adjacent to the weir, where, before the Boatman's Institute was completed, there was a 16th-century water mill. **Jessops Wharf** is a reference to the respected canal engineer William Jessop. He promoted and mentored many young engineers, including Thomas Telford and James **Barnes**, who became Principal Engineer of our Grand Junction Canal, at the far end of which is the little Northamptonshire town of **Braunston**. **Adams** (first name not yet found) appears also to have been a canal engineer.

Corsell, however, is a puzzle. At the Island's planning stage, Brentford and Chiswick Local History Society proposed a number of names related to the flood of 1841. In this tragedy one Henry Corsell played a minor part, as one of the victims, found on his boat with serious head injuries from which he died. It's surely not him? An Islander recalls having seen a Councillor Corsell named on a wall plaque within the West Middlesex Hospital complex before the new buildings were put in place, but it appears to have gone. The quest continues.

Swan-song for cygnets (again)

Well-informed Islanders know that a temporary rope and CD barrier hanging across the channel below the canal weir was put there in June by a concerned boater from the moorings, to help save this year's seven cygnets (mentioned in the May-June edition of NEWS) from being swept away, as has happened in recent years. Despite the sophistication of the barrier, it was not enough to prevent catastrophe, and the Island's swan couple are once more on their own. We have commented before on their poor parenting skills....

Meanwhile, the couple of swans who nested - somewhat precariously - in the restored nature area next to Brentford Bridge - are currently taking care of their one remaining cygnet. A long-established antagonism between the two sets of birds continues.

Restaurant Reviews

(1) Time bistro bar Tel: 020 8847 5777

Overlooking Brentford Lock and delighting in outdoor and now indoor dining, Time has become quite the venue for meals from breakfast, brunch, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner. Not to mention the bar and its exotic offerings.

The menu is extensive but not pretentious and the food was fresh, tasty and plentiful. Service was pleasant and just attentive enough, and best of all, the music was soft jazz, played softly.

Time has had some unfriendly reviews in the past but for our admittedly non-Epicurean palate, it was a lovely way to break out of lockdown and let someone else do the cooking and washing up.

(2) Cod N Rock

9 London Road, Brentford, TW8 8JB Tel: **020 8758 1004**

Cod N Rock (an obscure pun, perhaps?) is a new addition to Brentford's food options. Housed in the former chocolate shop opposite the Holiday Inn and only a few minutes' walk from The Island, it's a take-away chippie that also offers a full range of other fast-food staples - sausages, pies, burgers, kebabs and chicken. It's certainly not the healthiest but definitely tasty and well-made. The fried cod I enjoyed was white and fresh, the batter crispy and the chips cooked just right. The prices were reasonable and the portions generous with the 'regular' fish, chips and sausage enough for two people. There are also vegan and vegetarian choices such as falafel and vegan burgers and pies. As a guide, a regular cod & chips (for one person) costs £10.90.

Cod N Rock is open from lunchtime until late, seven days a week, and available for takeaway and delivery by ordering direct or through the delivery giants.

Hello, Watermans

Brentford has a functioning cinema again! The much-missed Watermans Cinema and Indian restaurant within (The

Guru Tandoori) both re-opened in late May. The cinema is showing a range of European and US films, with socially-distancing measures currently in place, as well as hosting a program of live performances and art exhibitions over the summer.

Farewell, Heidelberg

The German printing machine company, located across the High Street from Morrisons, has decided to move out of Brentford, as they find themselves now in a residential area. Selling their site for £40m must have helped. Unsurprisingly, blocks of flats for sale are expected to be built there.

Brentford's Watermans Park

The Island's resident historian, Simon White, recalls...

While we wait to see results of the work that has now started to improve Watermans Park with its new marina, it's an opportune moment to remember how Brentford was in the 1970s. The present part of the Park opposite Holland Gardens was a gas works with coal barges supplying the coking plants and the gas was pumped under the road to fill the gas holders where Holland Gardens now stands. Tall forbidding brick walls gave the appearance of driving through a tunnel to hell, and the accompanying smell and coal dust added to this impression. After the gas works was abandoned, the walls remained for more than ten years. Ron Bartholomew, later a Hounslow Councillor but then the prime mover of the Green Dragon Lane Housing Co-op, was eying all those bricks enviously. A year of negotiation with the Council eventually concluded, after direct action and the accompanying attention of the constabulary, that he could keep the bricks resulting from lowering the wall and fitting coping stones, at the height we see today. Many months of hard work for Ron and his volunteers followed, leaving us now able to enjoy views of the river from the High Street. In remembering the 'heritage' of Brentford we should not forget the downright ugliness of its history and remember those who played a part in improving it.



"A tunnel to hell" - Brentford High Street in the 1930s, looking east. Today's Travelodge is roughly in place of the building on the left.

Want to comment on any of the above?

Please email **paul@blira.co.uk**

Twitter: @BLIRAnews

BLIRA's Board is William Shaw & Nigel Meakin (joint Chairs), Margaret Bird, Nic Cantor, Peter Goddard, Paul Lang, Ian Parker, plus Associate Directors Howard Vanderborght and Stephen Browne