

The Island NEWS

Sept-Oct 2021



Statue of Flora, with cranes**

****This clear view of a late-18th century column in the gardens to Syon House, topped by a statue of Flora, Roman goddess of flowering plants (really!) has been contrived for years by the careful pruning of trees behind it. Keeping the view intact, Ballymore's first block of new flats, seen here surrounded by cranes, steps down from 9 to 6 storeys**

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

BLIRA: News from the Board

See the Board Minutes in full on the Website: they are published monthly. See also our Property Managers' occasional newsletter: "Island Watch"

Highlights from the meeting on 20th July (there was no meeting in August)

1. The Board's search for **new Directors** is proving fruitful. Also, Nigel Meakin and William Shaw (see item on right) have helpfully agreed to stay on as Associate Directors
2. Discussions are ongoing with CRT about means of saving future generations of **Island cygnets** from drowning when they go over the weir. The rope and CD device has not proved effective this year.
3. Repainting the exterior of the **Mill Houses** will commence in Spring 2022.
4. Consideration is being given to means of more effectively draining the **floor of the Underground Car Park**.
5. **Anti-pigeon spikes** have been coming loose from the roofs of flat blocks: they will be replaced.
6. Work on the **bin enclosures** is complete except for repainting of the steel columns
7. Repairs will soon be carried out on the **paving at the entrance circle**.

Date of next meeting: **7th September**.

A correction to an item in the July-August edition of the **NEWS** - damage to the Underground Car Park gate was slight, and the Islander involved immediately offered to pay for the repair.

William Shaw and Nigel Meakin

A fond farewell...

William and **Nigel** retire in September from their Co-chairmanship of BLIRA's Board of directors. Their five years of leadership has been an extremely productive period for the Island, with a variety of vital talents on the whole board and constant active engagement on the part of the Co-chairs. William's career as a surveyor made him all too aware of the lack of adequate and appropriate maintenance and the effect on the state of repair of the buildings. The managing agents then in situ were failing on several fronts and William was able to specify the neglect and mismanagement and bring order to handling the physical property and planned maintenance. Proper financial management, sorted through by board member Ian Parker's skilful dissection of the accounts, means we now have effective reserves to foresee and manage financial obligations.

Nigel's focus on the landscaping has ensured this remains one of the Island's key attractions. Having located a source of fibreglass planters, the original wooden ones are replaced as they erode. Artificial grass brings greenery where pebbles once ruled.



The Co-chairs led the intricate process of appointing new managing agents Michael Richards & Co. (a 10-month project) and have set clear objectives to which they work and on which they are held responsible. Then there are the almost daily niggles and complaints that come through the inbox and sometimes even personal mailboxes (BLIRA does have its own mailbox – see Contacts at the end of the NEWS). William and Nigel are the first to cite the Board itself as the key contributor to the Island's smooth running. With experienced and special talents – company CEO, project management, legal, human resources, I.T. skills, surveying/architecture and accountancy - the Board has worked cohesively and co-operatively to achieve success. That's another reflection of good leadership. **Nigel and William, we thank you!**

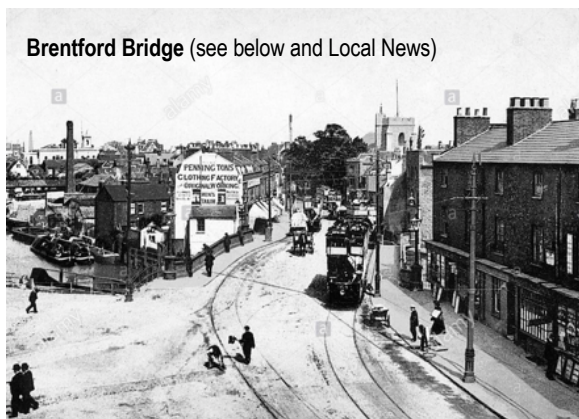
Social committee

Postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic, the **Summer BBQ** made a welcome return on Saturday free for residents to celebrate the end of almost 18 months of lockdown. Despite the showery weather on the day, over 50 Islanders enjoyed the burgers, sausages, Pimms and mingling with their neighbours. Many thanks to the Social Committee and volunteers for all their hard work. The next planned Island Social events (subject to Covid rules) are the **Oktoberfest** on **Saturday 9th October** and **Christmas Mulled Wine & Minced Pies** on **Friday 10th December**.

Restaurant Review

REPUBLIC: An Indian Eatery 301-3 Chiswick High Road, enjoyed by Guest Reviewer **Richard Silberman**.

Republic is an exciting Indian restaurant that has, at last, opened its doors in Chiswick. With Chef Kuldeep boasting a number of Michelin starred restaurants on his CV and his partner Mustaq, who previously worked at Kricket, Republic promises much. We took a chance and visited the evening lockdown was lifted. We were not disappointed. Inside, the décor is modern and welcoming with a choice of seating types: At the bar, where you can watch the chefs at work, or at a table (best to request when you book). Before we ate, we sampled the cocktail list, prepared by Republic's award-winning mixologist. The Elaichi Martini was incredible – a stunning mix of spiced gin, cardamon, mint and lime. The menu is exciting and unusual with a mix of small plates and mains. We ordered a number of the small plates and one main course each. We had Charred Cauliflower in a tandoori butter and Sweet Potato Chaat with kale pakora – both excellent. But the standout dishes were the Soya Kheema Sausage Roll, an imaginative play on the British staple, and Indian-style Crispy Chicken and Chips (you'll never go back to KFC again). The mains were just as good – the Tandoori prawns were succulent and tasteful as was the Pepper fried lamb shoulder. We've already been back for more, equally enjoyable evenings. <https://republicw4.com/>.



With the visible structure and parapets of Brentford Bridge now fully restored and repainted (in authentic Victorian garish red and green), here's a view from the west side, looking across the bridge to St Lawrence's Church. Built in 1824, it was widened in 1909 to accommodate the tramlines shown here.

Chiswick Cinema 94-96 Chiswick High Rd, W4 1SH

A short bus or train ride away from Brentford, recently-launched Chiswick Cinema is W4's first new cinema since 1934. Situated in the former Ballet Rambert dance studio on Chiswick High Road, the new multiplex houses 5 screens, a bar, café and a private members' restaurant. It has a boutique feel, with a glamorous art deco theme reminiscent of the golden era of Hollywood. On a Sunday afternoon when this reviewer visited, the cinema was already busy. This reviewer enjoyed a tasty pre-film New Orleans hot dog and beer at the downstairs café. The cinema is committed to eco-values, with a plastic free policy, and it encourages public transport (there is no parking). Films are premium-priced at £16 (off-peak is £10). But this is a very welcome addition to our local entertainment scene.

LOCAL NEWS

The Blot (first identified as such by the NEWS in Nov-Dec 2020 - wedged behind the Holiday Inn) emerged from its white plastic cocoon in July, and it looms over the more-sensitively designed buildings west of Toll House Lock, a boorish new neighbour with puke-coloured balustrades.

Brentford Bridge: the parapets are now fully restored and painted in original Victorian colours, with the outside panels featuring canal wildlife.

New Post Office: from 16 Sept. a small PO facility will be open in Food Link, next to the (now empty) Barclay's Bank unit on the High Street.

Sauki Sushi restaurant has taken over the Brentford Lock premises previously occupied by the Thames buffet eatery, and the Old Fire Station has re-opened - as **Makai**, a Japanese seafood restaurant. **NEWS reviews** may follow!

The Brentford Project - Summer activities have resumed - see <https://www.thebrentfordproject.com/summer-series-2021> (A friend in Hong Kong tells the NEWS that the Project is being heavily marketed there too).

Brentford's Revenge

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

For many years **Brentford Football Club** has been perceived as the fourth spoke in the West London League football hierarchy. Even if they did not perceive it themselves. They have recently been beating on the doors of those above them. And now stand solely behind Chelsea, leaving behind Fulham and Queens Park Rangers. Since his Oxford University graduation and subsequent City banking career, Matthew Benham, the somewhat reclusive chairman, the pivot of the Community Stadium redevelopment with its accompanying high rise towers incorporating hotel, residential, retail and offices, has invested very heavily in the club. Unlike many other football entrepreneurs, he has seen results. He is a statistician in his business life, providing statistical, analytical and data information for those who wish to pay for it such as high roll gamblers and betting companies. In football, his statistically analysed recruitment policy has been hugely successful. But before all the noise and glory that will be theirs this year, let us remember the peaceful orchard which Griffin Park, their former ground, was once. Named after the Griffin emblem of the Fuller brewing company to which it contributed its apples for cider making, by 1904 it had become a football ground and by 1935 the club achieved the ranks of the then First Division of the League – the old Premier League. After this period of glory lasting until 1947, for many years it struggled in lower divisions but was brought back to success by Benham whose total investment by June 2017 was over £100 million and growing. Let's see the Bees buzz, dazzle and entertain us for at least this season, and that Brilliant Brentford will be big enough to entertain all the great names and supporters of the Premier League for many years to come.



Want to comment on any of the above?

Please email paul@blira.co.uk

Twitter: @BLIRAnews

BLIRA's Board is Nic Cantor, Julie Downing, Peter Goddard, Paul Lang, Ian Parker, plus Associate Directors Stephen Browne, Nigel Meakin, William Shaw and Howard Vanderborght,