

The Beaconsfield Society

NEWSLETTER April 2014

Dates for your Diary

The Beaconsfield Society Literary Event 2014 Saturday 12th April 2014 at 2.30 pm and 6.00 pm

Behind the Lines - A World War One Anthology

The Fitzwilliams Centre, Windsor End, Beaconsfield
Tickets £10. Refreshments included.

Unveiling of the Enid Blyton Plaque

Wednesday 7th May 2014 at 2.30 pm

Council Green, Station Road, Beaconsfield

Beaconsfield Now! 2014

Saturday 14th June 2014 10am – 1 pm

Council Green, Station Road, Beaconsfield

The Beaconsfield Society Heritage visit

September 2014 (date to be announced)

Taplow Court

Chairman's letter

Mike Elliott

It is hard to remember a busier time for the Society, certainly none busier in my time as Chairman. The Wilton Park development is a central issue for us. Also, Old Town Parking proposals, Cycle path access to the Station and the potential for two storey car parks have been exercising us in recent months. Meanwhile we are preparing for our WW1 event "Behind the Lines", for Beaconsfield NOW 2014 and a heritage visit. All these points are covered in this newsletter.

The reasons to be a member of the Society have never been stronger, and I thank you for your continued support. Please share this message with friends and neighbours who care about Beaconsfield and encourage them to join us and make our voice all the stronger. We are always looking for sub-committee members to get involved, the key requirement being a passion for the town both now and for the future. If you, or someone you know, may be interested then a chat in one of our burgeoning number of coffee shops would be a good place to start.

Enjoy the newsletter and I hope to see you at one of our events soon.

Wilton Park

The Defence School of Languages has now moved out of Wilton Park after an MoD occupancy dating from WW2. Plans for redevelopment of the 100-acre site are being laid by SBDC, for whom it is seen as a strategic opportunity for the provision of more homes in South Bucks. Members of your Society's committee are major contributors to Wilton Park Watch, an association of several community groups within the town anxious to limit the strain that could be put on the town and its infrastructure while seeking to maximise benefit to existing residents. Please read the report on Wilton Park Watch in this newsletter.

This could be the biggest development affecting all of us in Beaconsfield in decades. Vigilance and openness are needed so that the voices of town residents can be truly recognised by councils at all levels.

Cycle Access to the station and traffic impact

A consultation was held during January on a series of proposals to create cycle routes and improve pedestrian access to the station. TBS is broadly supportive of cycling and pedestrian routes in the town and met with the relevant County Council officer and raised a series of practical issues with the proposed scheme. I am pleased to report a number of modifications resulted from our submissions, including the abandonment of one of the extra mini-roundabouts! We believe these will better balance the traffic of all types through the town. Inevitably we were not completely successful; modifications to the Grove Road/Station road junction will go ahead that seem totally unnecessary, pedestrian crossings on each of Maxwell road, Burkes Road, Gregories Road and across Station Road opposite Costa are welcome but will be raised (humped). The effects on pollution levels and transit time through to town remain to be seen.

We are told that the revised scheme will be implemented in May; road traffic "counters" have appeared.

Old Town Parking proposal

Another recent consultation was held on a proposal to reclassify the land on the margins of London End from its current "Common land" status and designate an area of land adjacent to Pyebush Roundabout to be "Common land" in its place. In so doing it would then be possible to have limited regulated parking in London End so as to prevent long stay and all day parking. Thus, those patronising businesses in the Old Town, tourists and casual visitors could enjoy short stay parking. This has been an issue for decades and this appears the first credible solution to address the problem. It is a complex and emotive issue but, on balance, your committee decided in favour subject to disability and resident provision in the scheme, protection of the Charter Fair, sympathetic landscaping and space marking and any charging tariff to include the first, say 30 minutes free. BOTRA, we believe, gave a similar response. We await the outcome of the consultation.

Two storey Car Parks in SBDC

There is work going on to evaluate the potential for the above across SBDC including Beaconsfield. We remain very suspicious of this initiative and worry as to the financial justification and aesthetics of any such proposal in the town. Two storey car parks are not works of art wherever they are located! We worry that increased commuter parking is misinterpreted as local parking demand. Your committee is seeking more information from all parties. Do we or do we not need more chargeable parking in the New Town?

Pride in Beaconsfield – Illegal Signage

Your committee is concerned that the town looks and feels like a place where we should all be proud to live. Anything that detracts from that is to be highlighted and addressed by the relevant agency. Of particular concern has been the level of fly posting and illegal signage appearing on street furniture, verges, walls and fences. I am pleased to say a work party from TBS with the agreement of BTC and Transport for Buckinghamshire did a sweep of the town. We removed more than 500 illegal, damaged and out of date signs, together with more than twice that many plastic ties, tape and wooden posts! We also collected abandoned traffic cones and advised BCC of others. Housing developers are amongst the offenders and it was good to see improvements following our initiative. We plan a repeat working party later this Spring.

Pride in Beaconsfield – Litter

The Society continues to bring issues of poor street cleanliness to the attention of SBDC and we encourage residents to do so as well. These would include overflowing bins and dog bins. You can do this by using an on line form on the SBDC website OR calling 01895 837362.

On 7 June we plan a working party and publicity event to coincide with the local Scouts Litter Picking week. We are working with the Chiltern Railways station Manager to co-ordinate some activity on the Station Approaches as well.

Mike Elliott

Background

Wilton Park Watch was established in order to keep a watching brief on Wilton Park, which had been identified by South Bucks District Council for development once the Defence School of Languages left the site. When their departure was confirmed at the end of 2012, the Beaconsfield Society and Beaconsfield Old Town Residents Association (BOTRA) convened a group to try to ensure that the proposed residential development would bring benefits to the whole of Beaconsfield.

Last year, members made early contact with Inland Homes, the announced preferred developer, who held a public consultation event on 14 and 16 March 2013. In response, we called an open Public Meeting on 9 April 2013, to allow public discussion of the major issues, as well as any other concerns residents wished to raise. The meeting was addressed by our MP Dominic Grieve, representatives of several community associations, a traffic consultant and attended by some 250 residents.

Based on this community input, Wilton Park Watch submitted a substantial document to SBDC and Inland Homes, setting out our views on how best to ensure the development would be of maximum benefit to the town. A copy of this document was sent to all who left their email address at the meeting, and published on the Beaconsfield Society's website. We followed up with further meetings with Beaconsfield's District Councillors and the Planning Officer from SBDC, BCC councillors and officers, and Inland Homes.

The recent SBDC consultation

The Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was published by SBDC on 17th January 2014. Wilton Park Watch organised another Public Meeting on 12th February 2014 to explore the issues arising from the proposals. The occasion attracted about 200 interested citizens, whose views again informed our 11-page submission to SBDC. In our response, we welcomed the way SBDC presented the views expressed in the original public consultation next to their proposals in the SPD, but were disappointed that some proposals which have public support were rejected without explanation.

Wilton Park Watch, while supportive of many of the proposals, seeks recognition and active steps over the impact on the Town's **infrastructure** in general and **traffic flow** in particular. Concepts in the SPD for the '**Community Hub**' are still superficial and need to be developed significantly to reflect practicalities, the needs of diverse sports and social users to ensure fitness for purpose. The opportunity to create (or support the creation of) a centre with facilities lacking in Beaconsfield has not yet been realised, as the Hub largely replicates facilities already in the Town. We have suggested that this could be addressed by convening a group with experience of running public events in Beaconsfield to discuss realistic possibilities.

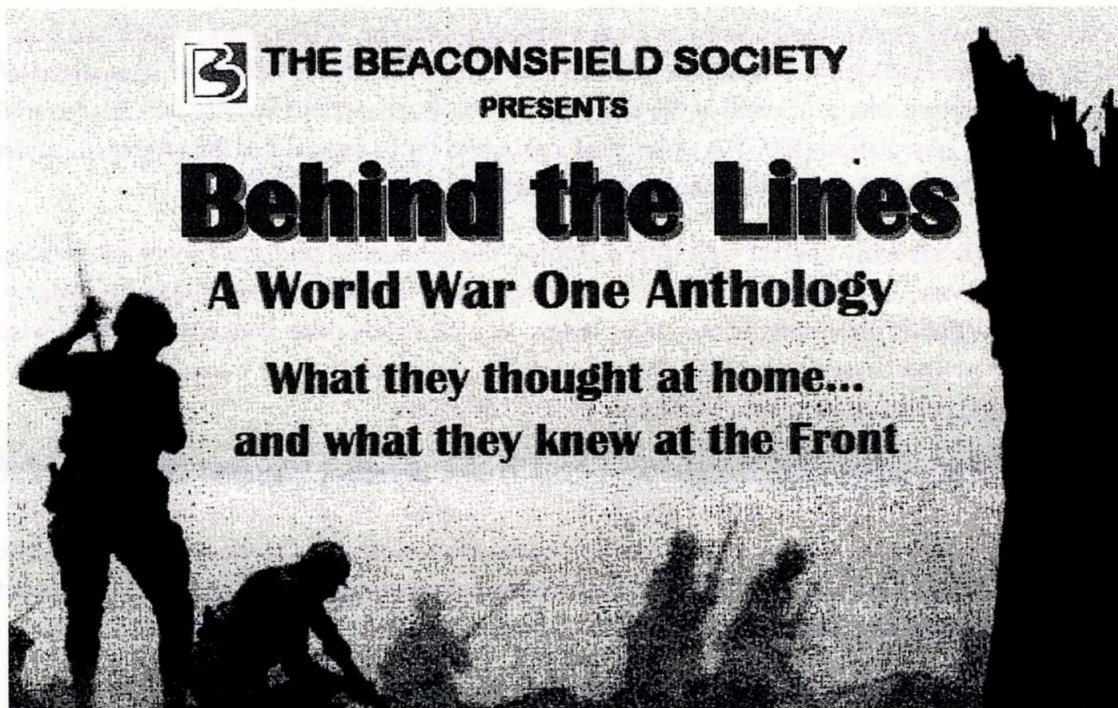
Next steps

The Draft SPD does have structure, clarity, and depth of contextual information with specific acknowledgement of public input from last year's exhibition. The existence of this consultation bodes well for interaction between SBDC and stakeholders as the final version is developed. It is very apparent from the document that SBDC is keenly aware of both the opportunities at this strategic site and the potential critical impacts on the wider and much more numerous Beaconsfield community, but we hope that it will deliver convincing plans, requirements and responses when the SPD is finalised in a few months' time.

We trust that our Town and District Councils will take up our offer to collaborate in exploring ways in which Wilton Park can be developed as a valuable addition to the town, integrating the community as much as possible. Outline Planning applications will follow later in the year; the Town's voices must speak out!

Our full response, along with the slides shown at the meeting, was placed on the society's website.

Keep an eye on our website www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk to keep up with developments.



The Beaconsfield Society's literary event this year will commemorate the centenary of World War One. Gabriel Woolf and Linda Hart, making a return visit to Beaconsfield, will read a wide variety of poetry, prose and songs about the war. The programme will include poems by Julian Grenfell, who had family connections with the Grenfells of Wilton Park, Beaconsfield.

Behind the Lines tells the story of what people thought at home at the start of the War, and what soldiers experienced at the Front, as it went into its second, third and fourth years. The enthusiasm for war expressed by Julian Grenfell and Rupert Brooke will be contrasted with the bitterness of Siegfried Sassoon and the wry humour of e. e. cummings. Other readings will include works by soldier poets Wilfred Owen, Edward Thomas, Ivor Gurney and Isaac Rosenberg.

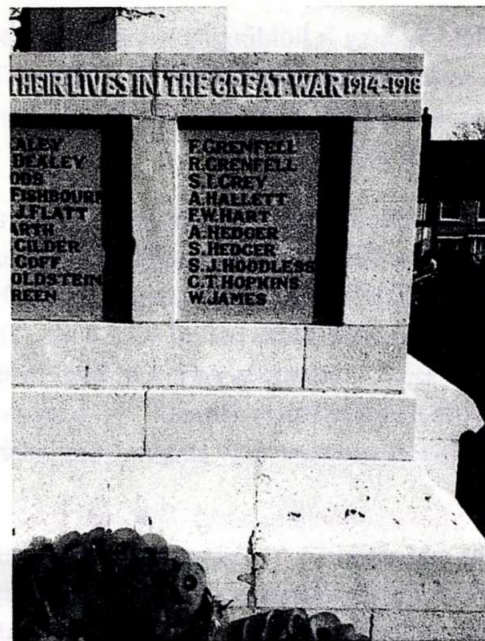
The readings darken in tone to reflect the horror that unfolded as the war dragged on. But, says Woolf, "humour helped the soldiers to survive, so our programme includes readings from the pages of the famous trench newspaper, *The Wipers Times*, which will provide some laughter. We've also included some snatches of WWI songs to lighten the atmosphere, as they did for the soldiers."

Linda Hart notes that "I am pleased to be reading several works by women who express their joy, their fears and then their anger as time and the war goes on. Most of these women are forgotten because of the focus on iconic poets such as Owen and Sassoon. But no programme on the War is complete without Vera Brittain's diary, and its record of the death of her beloved Roland. As an expat American I am pleased we have included a poem by Robert Frost, who lived in Beaconsfield from 1912 to 1914."

The Grenfell Connection. There are many connections between the town of Beaconsfield and the Grenfell family. Julian Grenfell was a cousin of Beaconsfield's war heroes, the Grenfell twins. The twins' family home was Wilton Park, Beaconsfield. Later they lived at Butlers Court with their uncle and guardian, Field Marshall Baron Francis Grenfell of Kilvey.

On 24 August 1914, Capt. Francis Grenfell gained the coveted Victoria Cross for gallantry in action following the Battle of Mons. He was one of the first officers in the British Army to be awarded the VC in this war. His twin brother Riversdale was killed less than a month later. Julian and his brother, Gerald William Grenfell, also died in the War.

The twins' names are on the Beaconsfield war memorial and there is a stained glass window in St. Mary's Parish Church in their memory.



(photo of the twins from a book by John Buchan titled *Francis and Riversdale Grenfell* published Thomas Nelson 1920 ed.)

Saturday 12th April at 2.30pm and 6.00pm

at the Fitzwilliams Centre, Windsor End, Beaconsfield, HP9 2JW

Tickets £10 (refreshments included) on sale

at Beaconsfield Library, Reynolds Road, Beaconsfield HP9 2NJ.

Tel 0845 230 3232 or email lib-bea@buckscc.gov.uk.

Also available online from www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk

Supported by The Frost Partnership

Frost
The Frost Partnership

Enid Blyton plaque for Beaconsfield

Kari Dorme

The unveiling of the commemorative plaque for Enid Blyton is to take place on Wednesday 7th May at 2.30 pm in the garden in front of Beaconsfield Town Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend. Local school children and their teachers have been invited. The plaque which was commissioned and paid for by Beaconsfield Town Council will take pride of place next to the existing painted figures of Noddy and Big Ears.

The Mayor of Beaconsfield Sandy Saunders will be doing the honours at the unveiling ceremony. The brass plaque is the result of a campaign by the Society to raise awareness of the town's world famous children's author. This follows the Society's successful Enid Blyton Week of events and films for all ages last year.

Enid Blyton was a resident of Beaconsfield for more than 30 years from 1938-1968. She named her house on the Penn road "Green Hedges" and it became a world famous address for all her fans that wrote to her. During her years at Green Hedges she introduced Noddy and wrote all 21 Famous Five books as well as all the Secret Seven and Adventure series.

The Beaconsfield Society is holding its annual event Beaconsfield Now on June 14th from 10am until 1pm on the Town Council Green. This annual show case of not for profit organisations in and around Beaconsfield promises to be a fun day. We already have over thirty stalls registered and keen to engage you with activities for all ages.

A number of new stalls are attending this year. One is the **Beaconsfield Model Railway Club** looking for more enthusiasts. The **Beaconsfield Archive Project** is looking for volunteers so find out more at the **Beaconsfield and District Historical Society** stand. If you have a moment to spare, why not help **School Aid** pack boxes of donated books bound for Africa. The **606 Squadron air cadets** will try to entice you with their ejector seat. Community care is offered by many; why not discover more? What does care for the elderly look like at **Bradbury House**? Have fun with the **Rotary Club of Beaconsfield** or that of **Jordans and District** and meet new people while raising money for good causes.

Are you keen to learn something new? Why not find out about the **WEA, WI or U3A**. They have many interesting talks and activities to discover. **BDFAS** will inform those wanting to learn more about Fine Art. Remember to look out for characters from **local theatre groups** advertising their local productions. Take care to meet the donkey who will be racing in the **Donkey Derby**.

These are but a few of the many stands that will be available to browse on June 14th. Our local compère, Bob Massie will introduce us to the different stall holders so that you can find out when and where they meet and what they offer.

There will be burgers and hot dogs as well as tea and cakes supplied by the **Beaconsfield Guides and Scouts**. Local musicians and artists will be entertaining everyone come rain or shine.

The youngest members should enjoy the bouncy slide or be entertained by climbing on board the fire engine and quizzing the firemen. This will provide time to discover information about what's on offer from the **Beaconsfield Library** or **Bekonscot Model Village** stalls. More seriously, resuscitation Annie and the St John Ambulance will be attending for you to learn some life saving skills.

June 14th 10am until 1pm promises to be an excellent family day, thanks to generous support of The Shanly Foundation, so book the date in your calendar now and join us on the Town Council Green.



The Society

<http://www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk>

The current Committee is as follows:

Chairman: Mike Elliott
Secretary: Laurence Smaje
Treasurer: Graeme Richards
Committee: Tony Bristow, John Burton, Kari Dorme, Nanu Hodson, Debbie Marsden, Colin Mitchell.

Our President is Les Davies and our Vice-President is John Page.

The Society's Website www.beaconsfieldsociety.org.uk

Any contributions, suggestions or criticisms from members will be gratefully received by the Secretary; please contact him via the website or directly by phone, 01494 681165, or by email to laurence@smaje.co.uk.

We hope you found the Newsletter interesting and informative. Feel free to pass this on to interested neighbours and friends and do encourage them to come along to our events and become members.