

Winter 2011 newsletter of the Birchfield Residents Action group

OFFICERS LAUNCH SCHOOL LESSONS IN HANDSWORTH CUSTODY BLOCK



St Clare's Children, happily, behind bars ?

PUPILS from St Clare's Catholic Primary have become the first to visit cells at Handsworth police station as part of a crime prevention initiative launched by the Lozells and East Handsworth neighbourhood policing team.

PCSOs Nigel Smith and Dave Mogridge have created the initiative to teach youngsters the consequences of living a criminal lifestyle. Lessons are two hours long and take place inside the old disused cells.

Pupils from St Clare's visited the cells in early December and are returning for a second time on Tuesday (14 December).

The children, aged between 9 and 11 years, were shown around the cells and interview rooms by the officers.

They then spent time discussing the consequences of having fingerprints and DNA taken and learnt

about the disadvantages of having a criminal record.

The initiative was set up following discussions with local teachers who wanted to show pupils the reality of being in police custody.

A number of schools have already arranged visits to the station and officers hope to attract further schools as the initiative gathers pace.

PCSO Nigel Smith said: "This initiative has been set up to show youngsters that criminality is not glamorous. By taking pupils around the cells at such a young age, we hope to leave a lasting impression that crime does not pay.

"All of the children seemed to really enjoy the visit and we hope to further increase trust and confidence with our younger communities whenever possible."

This story can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/birminghamwestandcentralpolice>

FREE Event
on 10th March at
Banqueting Suite
Birchfield Road

to Celebrate
Birchfield's Talent

FREE FOOD
Mendhi, Face
Painting,
Entertainment

Its your chance to celebrate
Birchfield's and make new friends
Auditions are being held for
singers, dancers,
any performers and Poets

send your details to
brag07@gmail.com

Deadline 14th February 2011



Who is waving to who?
Explore the world of SOCIAL
NETWORKING MEDIA.
See our centre spread, pages 4&5

other features

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NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR REDUNDANT SOCIAL CLUB

Plans revealed for Older Persons Home



DEACON meets DECON

Deacon Tony from St Teresa's Church, Perry Barr (left), with **Dominic Bradley** (centre) from Trident Housing, and Danny from Decon Electrical, admire plans for the proposed new redevelopment of St Teresa's Club site.



Long awaited plans were unveiled recently after a year of activity behind the scenes by Cornerstone Regeneration. This is a charitable enterprise set up by Monsignor Danny McHugh who is responsible for the regeneration of church sites within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Birmingham. The club had been leased to different tenants over the years but the time had come when it was decided to demolish it because of expensive ongoing maintenance costs, and security implications.

At one time there was a possibility of part of the site being sold to Lidl for their proposed supermarket development, however, this has not happened for various reasons, and the intention now is for the club site to become a four story accommodation provision for the elderly, with 42 units. The plans reveal that Trident Housing Association will be the developers of the site, once funding from the government has been secured to enable some flats to be offered at social rents; the other units will be available to purchase.

Monseigneur Danny explained that this is in line with current government policy, which as a scheme for the over 55's. also meets Birmingham's strategy for housing and older peoples services. It responds to presenting choice to older people, ending isolation and enabling



them to look after themselves for as long as possible. He went on to say that eventually the parish will have a part to play, along with Sisters, in running this care provision for the Elderly. Thus the parish land will be used for the good of the community and at the same time generate some income for the parish. The land previously occupied by a Tyre fitting company would be available also for development.

He went on to emphasis that the proposal, soon to go to the Planning department, has been prepared in conjunction with the Cities Regeneration Department, who see this project as part of their overall plan for the area, "it complements what they would like to see happen, meeting the needs of the elderly, which for the Catholic Church is a priority".

Parishioners, local residents and business tenants of the parish property

ajoining the site were reassured that once the plans were approved, demolition of the existing building would start and foundations would be laid. Access from Wellington Road would be across the existing car park that has provided free parking for clients of the nearby Polish Food Store and hairdressing saloon opposite, for a long time.

One long standing parishioner of some 50 years, who remembers the foundations of the club being dug by parishioners, is not so sure about the prospect of attracting the Government funding that is needed to move the project forward. He favours leasing the Old Tyre Fitting site to the right developer to gain further funding. We are told that that the parish proposes building a Community Centre on its existing land helped with funds from any leasing.

The plans show the view from the railway line side of the 42 unit development

PROGRESS AT BIRCHFIELD ESTATE REGENERATION SITE ?

The Urban Living hoardings still conceal the undeveloped site. Birchfield Residents look forward to signs of promised activity this year, now that the last remaining tower will be coming down. We are told by the council that developers will be invited to submit plans for providing house for sale with some at "social rent". We asked if previous tenants of the demolished towers and maisonettes would be offered first choice if they choose to return, but it is not the council's policy to make such offers.

LAST TENANTS MOVE

The final 2 ladies of the group of tenants who we featured in our Spring issue last year are now enjoying their new house in another part of the city. Winson Sutherland is pictured below with her daughter on the day that the Council sent a removal van to help them move. They are glad to leave the maisonettes which became increasingly subject to vandalism and theft of piping.



Now that the final tenants of the estate have moved to new accommodation the estate is ready for activity by the



developers once approved. We were told not to expect any signs of building activity for at least another year. We asked if provision had been made for a Community Centre and Children's Play area in the plans. Councillors have assured us that it is their intention to provide at least a childrens' playground as they "borrowed" allocated money to help the refurbishment of the Church Hill



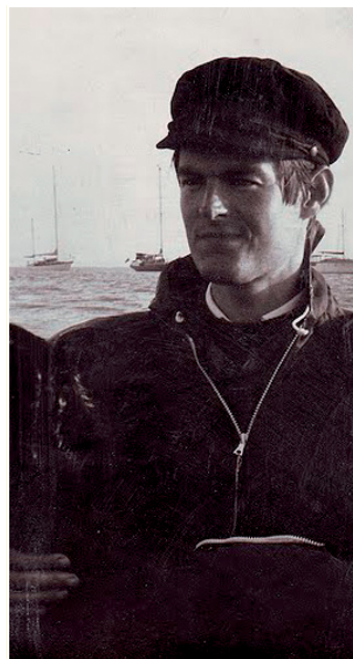
Winson receives her last post in Birchfield

Road playground, on the understanding that this money would be re-allocated to the estate in the future. In the meantime Birchfield Residents Action Group suggests that should developers be slow in coming forward that prospective householders be allowed to put up a Tesco Flatpack 5 roomed house, available for only 10

thousand pounds. To use this type of pre-fabricated building was one of the design plans that local people came up with on an urban landscape course that was offered at the City University in 2009. It is hoped that architects will work with local people as they prepare plans for this exciting new development which stands in a strategic position on the main corridor into the city.

Simon Badderley, whose son took the picture above, has this to say on his Blog; "It's about the interconnection of housing, jobs, architecture, green space, health, education, transport, sustainability. It's about the circuitry of the area - IT, lighting, energy and water. It's about places to buy and sell, to worship, to play, to grow, to sit and talk, to listen, to eat, to associate, to read and view. It's about shops, markets, gardens, smallholdings and trees - all with an eye to the broader changes that transform the practices and objects of one era so they become incomprehensible or impractical in another. I wonder what we would see if we took a photograph here in 20 years time." We wonder to.....

Follow progress, together with other local news on our web site at www.brag.btik.com



If you have time on your hands there is a real treat if you want to explore Simon's world. Just set course for his

Democracy Street Blogsite, follow hundreds of photos on **Flickr.com** and hours of video

on <http://vimeo.com/user3920728> and youtube.com. He will introduce you to step father Jack Hargreaves, the TV presenter, and his mother, who at 94 still communicates regularly by computer. You will learn about his campaigns to save Handsworth Park, local allotments, indeed the world. You might just keep up as he commutes between the UK and Greece, in his retirement.

“Got the plot

A genial crowd of all ages assembled on the Victoria Jubilee Allotments at noon on Saturday 12 June 2010. Council allotments officers Adrian and Mohammed strolled around the site placing small flags on each plot. After a short briefing from Adrian, shortlisted claimants were invited to choose their plots by picking the flag on it, and bringing it back to the gardener's communal hut to sign a contract and pay rent to September.

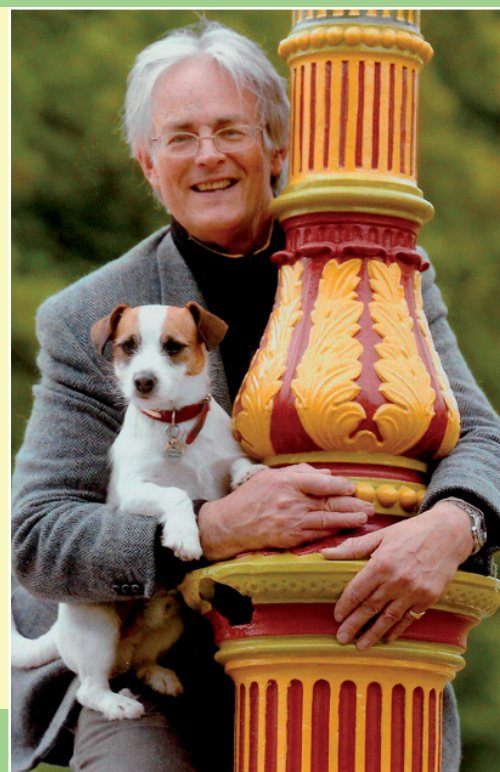


www.abc.net.au/reslib/201003/r529674_3001913.jpg
“with apologies to Grant Wood”

Everybody who applied on Saturday seems to have got the plot they wanted. Now comes the hard work.”

Simon has campaigned for many years to preserve the heritage that was the Handsworth Victoria Jubilee Allotment site. Here he poses, Handsworth Gothic style with his wife Linda

Snapshots from the Blog pages of an extraordinary local “Flâneur” **SIMON BADDELEY**



“Handsworth Park restored bandstand
Simon Baddeley with Oscar. May 2005. The bandstand in Handsworth Park, Birmingham (UK) was meticulously restored, under the guidance of Dr Hilary Taylor, by Heritage Foundry near Glasgow, a few miles from the foundry that made it in the 1880s, after Birmingham City Council and partner organisations had raised several million pounds to restore the whole park - officially re-opened in July 2006.”

In Handsworth, Birmingham

“Whenever someone goes on about the notorious inner city area of Handsworth with its history of riots and crime I ponder this view from our balcony looking over towards the tower of St. Mary's Church and the trees of Handsworth Park, a quarter of a mile from the Villa Road.

www.flickr.com/search/?w=53381278@N00&q=handsworth&m=tags

Urban pathology is an important area of academic study and no-one should down-play the injustice of unequal wealth but given the choice I've no wish to live anywhere else in the city than here - for the place and for the people who are our neighbours, known and unknown.”



“Crossing the M54 at Telford

I'm a tourist in my own country, travelling to workplaces in different towns and cities, by train and folding bicycle. It's 0815 and I've paused on a pedestrian and cycle bridge between Telford



Central Station and a lecture room on Telford campus of Wolverhampton University. Venice is Europe's great carfree city. 'Venice is a 1500-year-old car-free city, a living example of how a modern car-free city could look and feel. Venice supports a vibrant street life, which is an essential ingredient for Cycling to work

I don't even feel I'm wearing 'a hair shirt' because on a bicycle you thread the motorised traffic, shift to parks and canal

towpaths, hop off and walk, stop where you like, unrestrained by clamps, meters, cameras and the paperwork and cash that goes with owning an automobile. I enjoy the smells and sounds and sights in a way that makes the inside of a car seem enclosing. I get many a wave and nod and chance conversations with strangers. Cycling makes me feel healthier. Because my bicycle folds I can keep it with me - so have little worry about thieves, who don't understand how it works (except in London). I live in a famous inner city area, but I find my oddity (bloke in suit on folding contraption) earns curiosity, amusement, even respect so long as I return it.”



“John Martin and I have been running seminars together, in North Queensland, in Brisbane, Sydney and Tasmania, during November and December 2010. Our focus: skills and values among councillors and managers negotiating their overlapping responsibilities in local government. We're standing in front of one of the many films we've made in which practitioners, Mayors and CEOs (in Australia) and Leaders and CEOs in UK, discuss their working relationships.”

Simon now has a residence on Corfu at Democracy Street in Ano Korakiana
www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CLjpGtgwCI



<http://www.digital-in.info/korakiana/korakiana-dimos.html>

Follow Simon at <http://democracystreet.blogspot.com>

CHEERFUL YEAR AHEAD AT ONE STOP

The Bugle popped into One Stop Shopping Centre recently to ask manager, Bashir Dalvi, what the prospects are for the year ahead. "We have two new stores opening soon, TJ Hughes, a major department store, and Pets At Home, that's good news"



SUCCESS STORIES

Above photo shows One Stop Manager Bashir Dalvi, centre, with the owner of **The Jewellery Box** (left), who now has a shop replacing the small stall where she started.

Right, Michelle is pictured outside her shop, the Little BAG company. Another 1STOP success story, as she too once had a promotional stall in the centre of the Mall.



"BUCKING THE TREND"

pictured below is Mark Burbridge, deputy manager, who has "great aspirations for the centre to gain a top Environmental award this year"



Every day Bashir travels over 85 miles to work at this unique shopping centre where he has been its enthusiastic manager for four years, helping to turn it around from its previous "failing image", to become the thriving centre that it is today. "I enjoy the friendly feel and meeting the community daily". He has great plans to make the Centre even more appealing, and his Deputy, Mark Burbridge, pictured left, beside the mural that was painted by art students, will be submitting an application to gain a prestigious environmental award, Iso 4001.

If you are one of the many local people who use the centre, you would have seen the spacious new entrance area with its new escalator. "I would like to see a coffee drinking area there, to make it even more inviting". He is pleased with the facilities offered by the new Wetherspoons, "a touch of class in Perry Barr". A spacious new lift is also planned for the Spring. In our next issue we plan to bring you more news of this fast growing popular local shopping centre with the community at its heart.

Our Neighbourhood Manager's spot: here she tell us about STREET CHAMPIONS



Yvonne Wager

"Spring Clean for Birchfield

At the beginning of March Birchfield will launch its first 'Spring Clean' event to involve residents with helping to make the neighbourhood a greener, cleaner and safer place to be.

There are many ways to become involved through Birchfield Residents Action Group (BRAG), working with your neighbourhood police team or why not think about becoming a Street Champion? Street Champions is an opportunity for residents or community groups to choose a street or community area to look after by reporting

issues as they arise to Birmingham City Council like litter, fly tipping and graffiti. For further details please contact Rajinder Rattu on (0121) 448 8187 / mobile 07515 531 272 or visit www.birminghamstreetchampions.co.uk To find out more about what's happening in Birchfield visit www.birchfield.org.uk or contact Yvonne Wager, Birchfield Neighbourhood Manager on (0121) 675 7061 / mobile 07917 172530 or pop in to see me at the CMAT Centre, 16 Grosvenor Road, Handsworth, B20 3NP."

FAITH IN ACTION reports on FAITHS for FUN

Dr Peter and Jean Rookes of the Scout Association describe the event



Judging from the constant buzz during the afternoon and everyone's comments, the 3rd annual Faiths for Fun event at a local Community Learning Centre was a great success.

It was attended by a total of 108 people of different faiths and cultures, including children, base holders, helpers, parents and visitors. The benefits to the children were very apparent as they threw themselves into having fun, learning about a variety of faiths and making friends with children of different cultures. There were also obvious benefits for the adults who enjoyed the opportunity of meeting new people with whom they would not



normally have come into contact and of being involved in activities and networking with some of the representatives from the various faith groups in Birmingham. We believe this to be very important in our richly multicultural city.

Each year we learn a few more lessons which enable us to improve the following year's event, so we hope that next year it will be even bigger and better. We feel very privileged to be able to bring together the Scout Association, VSO and Faiths' organisations at this event. The Faith for Fun celebration was officially opened by David



Bradnock MBE, DL, JP, FBHI, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, who attended in full uniform which added to the splendour of the event and of course the youngsters showed great interest in his sword and spurs as he walked around and spoke

individually to the children and adults in each group. As the children arrived and registered they joined the 'parachute game', which enabled them to get rid of surplus energy. After the opening ceremony they rotated in multifaith teams between the 6



faith bases: Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh to carry out a fun activity at each and through this learn something about each faith. Activities included Sikh turban making, making Christmas cards, manoeuvring

an obstacle course to simulate the Muslim journey to Haj and playing a Buddhist board game.

At the end of the afternoon they spent an hour playing indoor

tennis and football together in the large sports hall supervised by trained sports coaches. The event concluded by a presentation of certificates of attendance to the children by Rick Keeber, County Commissioner of the Birmingham Scout Association.



Winter can be beautiful in our area

Most of us take a pride in our area and enjoy living here. The Polish family that has regularly decorated their house, pictured below, for Christmas since they arrived ten years ago say they enjoy being part of the community, and want their children to succeed.



Many of us make good use of our local parks. Here on Christmas day the winter snow added to its pleasure. The wildlife are well looked after by this member of the Asian community, who have a great love for all things natural.

BUT CERTAIN SPOTS CAN BE SO DISGUSTING,



The shopping area, pictured left, opposite the Crown & Cushion is often untidy with litter. Perhaps we need more or bigger bins. Leaving Black Bags outside your house all week attracts



WHY DO WE PUT UP WITH IT?

vermin, like this unfortunate fox, shown above. Why not be a good neighbour and help to educate our newly arrived folk about the need to keep our streets tidy. They are often coming from places where rubbish is just part of their daily lives and they do not know any better.

St Clare's School Care for their area

12 children from St Clare's Catholic Primary school have been busy planting shrubs in planters on Putney Avenue not far from their school. They did this project with CSV (community Service Volunteers), and will look after the plants during the coming year. We are hoping that other local schools will follow their example and

CARE 4 YOUR AREA.



Birchfield Residents Action Group (BRAG) was set up to highlight problems within the Birchfield area. Our aim is to cooperate with all the organisations working in and responsible for the well being of our residents.

Our hope is to regenerate pride and find agreed solutions to the problems.

This quarterly newsletter illustrates some of the current activities that are happening in our area, and has been kindly funded by Be Birmingham's Successful Neighbourhoods fund, and may not entirely reflect the views of the council.

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