

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008

In my second annual report I wish to acknowledge and recognise the tremendous hard work and dedication that all officers, members of the Council and members of the various committees bring to your Society. They all do an outstanding and superb job to ensure the aims and objectives of the Society are maintained and progressed.

I begin with Marianne Atterton, who does a sterling and first-rate role as your Secretary, a position she has held for 18 years. Marianne carries out many roles, including the Prince John commemoration and I know you will all agree with me that we had an extremely high standard and inspiring programme of lectures for 2007 put together by her. As you will be aware, Marianne announced her decision to stand down as Secretary at last year's AGM. Whilst I will have more to say at the AGM, I wish to thank Marianne for her commitment and enthusiasm to this role, she will be a very hard act to follow and we will all miss her wealth of experience, dedication and knowledge that she has brought to the Council and the Society over many years.

Our Treasurer, Margaret Skinner keeps and maintains our finances in excellent and good order and brings such an experience to all Society matters and her active involvement on the Amenity committee. Laurie Baker, expertly chairs our Amenity committee, which has been incredibly busy in 2007 steadily tackling a number of issues, including planning applications for the Grove Market and Welcome Inn sites, the construction and development of the exciting new Eltham Centre, transport issues affecting the Eltham area and the setting up of Friends groups for the many parks and open spaces that adorn Eltham. Laurie also monitors and updates our web site, which has proved a considerable success not just for members but those with a keen interest in Eltham's history and amenities. There is no doubt that this is an excellent way to attract new members and inform a wider audience of all our activities that our Society can bring. We all owe Laurie our special thanks for maintaining this incredible resource.

I know all members appreciate and value the brilliant job that Monica Horner does in planning and organising a varied and interesting programme of social outings, which are always well attended and it is amazing the places Monica finds to visit. As always the cheese and wine evening and the Christmas dinner at the Bromley Court Hotel are highlights to the social calendar and the 2007 events were no exception. Monica has been assisted by Joanne Sanderson who joined the Council in 2007 and has organised our attendance at the last two pantomimes at the Bob Hope Theatre, which I know many members enjoy attending at the start of a new year.

I know you will all agree with me that our quarterly newsletter so splendidly produced by our Editor, John Kennett is such a great written resource for all members and ensures we are all kept in touch with Society activities and developments in Eltham. We all owe John, along with all contributors a great debt of gratitude for producing a newsletter that would be the envy of many other societies. Marion Kennett who is a great asset to the Council from her wealth of knowledge and experience in Eltham Town Centre matters has also recently become involved in the production of the newsletter, which we all agree is such a jewel for the Society. John actively represents the Society on local planning meetings, ensuring our issues and concerns are voiced and I know his

local history walk in 2007 around the Corbett Estate was well supported and his annual lecture to the Society in December exploring the life and career of Sir Kingsley Wood, local MP and wartime Chancellor of the Exchequer brought our 2007 lecture programme to an extremely successful end.

After an incredible twenty years as the Society's Publicity Officer, Les Murrell announced his decision to stand down from the Council. For all these years Les worked so tirelessly to ensure our events and lectures were publicised to the local press with the great flare and content of his articles these ensured that the Society's activities were brought to a wider audience. We will all miss his immense authority and great sense of humour at Council meetings; however I am very pleased that Les has agreed to continue to report on our lecture meetings as I know these are so welcomed by members and form an important feature of our newsletters.

Our Membership Secretary, Gill Towey ensures all new memberships are processed smoothly and during the time of renewals works extremely hard with the support and assistance of John Towey, who again in 2007 secured a huge sum through his excellent work in reclaiming our gift aid amount, which can be used on publications and other Society activities. I would also like to thank John for his valuable advice and support he has provided me when I have sought it. It is always a pleasure to discuss with him on a wide range of Society issues.

The Society owes our special thanks to Dick Bowmaker and his team of Dorothy Bates and Ivy Spice who organise the distribution of the newsletters and the many members who deliver them throughout the year. Daphne Tennant and Charles Howell do a wonderful job of looking after our sales table at lecture meetings. Our publications are a great source of information about Eltham's history and heritage and would encourage members to ensure they have copies of all those that are currently available. I also want to thank all those members that help with the tea roster at lecture meetings, this is very much appreciated and welcomed by all members attending.

We have a great and enthusiastic team on the Council. Phyllis Duignan has the very important role of minute secretary and helps in many ways with Society activities; Barbara Kingston brings many qualities to the Council and is keen to see how we can progress the Prince John Commemoration in the future; Pam Kraeft is always willing to help and assist at lecture meetings and other events; Francis Lee not only is always there making ready the hall for lecture meetings, but is our representative on Eltham Town Centre matters and Shelia Squire who is always there assisting at lecture meetings and had agreed to manage the tea roster. All should be recognised for the immense contribution they make to the Society.

I believe 2008 will be another very successful and remarkable year for the Society, with our excellent range of lectures, pleasurable walks led by John Kennett and Neill Trueman, our Eltham in Pictures exhibition, our attendance at various events to promote the Society, Eltham's heritage and sell our publications, our Amenity committee, to scrutinise planning applications and ensure our voice and opinions are heard and the exceptional social activities, which many members enjoy. It all goes to show what an outstanding and wonderful organisation The Eltham Society is.

David Sleep