
This is the biography of a London suburb, of its planning and social life, from the time of its creation a hundred years ago until to-day. It is a well-researched history of tenant co-partnership in the creation of Brentham, a collection of a dozen or so streets just south of Pitzhanger Park in Ealing. It tells of the struggle to control its subsequent development and of a group of residents, who in recent times determined to tell the story of this forgotten but important piece of town planning.

It starts with brief but comprehensive survey of the Garden City movement and the various trends of thought that informed and influenced the builders. These were drawn from John Ruskin's essay 'On the Nature of Gothic' in *The Stones of Venice*, William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, Raymond Unwin's various publications of city building including *The Art of Building a Home* (his office was responsible for the original layout), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, and the Fabians. A second thread of the
story traces the life of carpenter Henry Vivian whose brain-child Brentham was, and of the Labour Association which built much of the suburb. It explains too the working of co-partnership in the finance of the project, which differed in an important way from that of the co-operative movement; but both were united in opposition to any revolutionary notions. Co-partnership enabled houses to be built by skilled building workers for themselves and other tradesmen.

A very well illustrated and detailed catalogue of the dwellings and plans tells of Brentham’s chequered history and of the architects and others who were responsible for the house designs. Most of these drew their forms and decoration (sometimes with unfortunate consequences) from Arts & Crafts architects, particularly Unwin, who designed a few of the houses. The influence of Baillie Scott and Voysey is there, as is that of A. J. Penty, though he is not mentioned. He worked in Unwin’s office from 1908 to 1914, and during that time designed the two entrance buildings to Hampstead Garden Suburb. These clearly influenced the design of Brentham’s Institute. Penty, who was the author of The Restoration of the Gild System (1906), must have had much in common with Vivian.

Well designed and produced, the book is a valuable addition to the early history of town planning and will certainly encourage one to pay a visit to Brentham.

Godfrey Rubens