

# B E R K H A M S T E D   C I T I Z E N S '   A S S O C I A T I O N

N E W S L E T T E R - S P R I N G   1 9 7 2

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In any Association such as ours, communication between members, those elected to the Committee and also future members can always be improved. The Berkhamsted Citizens' Association is no exception and I feel that it is one of my urgent tasks to try to do something about it; accordingly the Committee has asked Mr. Ted May to take on the editorship of the Newsletter. He will make it a lively and informative communication between the Committee and you, our members.

Another of the Committee's tasks for the year is to try and increase our membership. With all the changes that will come about if the Local Government Boundary Commission proposals are accepted, it is more than ever important that the Association is not only strong, but seen to be strong. Our aim is to double our membership in the next two years and to enable us to do this, we need your support.

During the Summer, the plan for the new Town Centre will be published. It is vital that everyone has the opportunity not only to discuss the proposals, but also to be informed of their implications. We, in the Citizens' Association believe that it is our duty to do all we can to help in this, and we shall, therefore, be holding a series of meetings, in conjunction with County and local officials, so that everyone can put his or her views.

Finally, returning to my first theme - communication - I should like to draw your attention to the list of Officers and Committee Members which appears in the Newsletter. Any one of us will be pleased to hear from you and will call on you if you have any matters on which you would like our help. I, as Chairman, am fortunate to have a keen, enthusiastic and well - informed Committee and I am sure that this year will be an eventful one for your Association.

ALAN J. HAVELOCK.

## RE-ORGANISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The next two years will be as significant to the Citizens' Association as they will be to the town itself. The Re-organisation of Local Government, however well it is finally worked out, may leave the feeling among townfolk that representation based at Hemel Hempstead is too remote. Our Association will have an important task in helping to bridge any gaps which exist in disseminating information of general interest to the town, in alerting citizens to the town's problems, and in organising the promotion of worthwhile advances, or resistance to decisions or plans which are considered to run counter to the general well-being of Berkhamsted and district.

## MEMBERSHIP

Those of you who attended the AGM will remember our Speaker's comments on membership. The town has a population of some 15,000 and our paid-up membership is almost 200 families, divided more or less equally, into one group of long-standing members and a second group of newcomers to the town. Your Committee feel that there are a good many citizens who agree wholeheartedly with what the Association does but who have not quite got round to joining. In view of the part that the Association has been asked to play with regard to the Town Plan, we feel that we ought to represent, knowingly, a larger percentage of the townspeople. We hope, therefore, that you will discuss our work with your neighbours and friends and perhaps encourage them to join. If you, yourself, have a particular expertise in a subject such as planning, law, sociology, building and publicity which, may be of assistance to the Association's efforts on particular projects or topics, please do not hesitate to come forward by contacting a Committee Member.

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL

One of the most exciting recent developments in the town is the setting-up of a Community Council. It looks as though it has been well worth waiting for. It will be part of a fairly informal nationwide group of such Councils which have been created to co-ordinate locally the efforts of official and unofficial bodies covering a broad spectrum of social welfare and facilities. The Association wishes the Council every success in its work, and looks forward to participating in the venture through its representatives.

### EMPTY SHOPS

Meanwhile, the other Council (Urban District, that is) has finally decided to start charging rates on vacant property in the town. The news is greeted with particular satisfaction by the Association, which for several years has been pressing the U.D.C. On just this subject, with special regard to the forlorn state of empty property in the town centre. Let's hope the owners, whoever and wherever they are, will now take a more responsible attitude to the care and maintenance of such buildings.

### TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

On the subject of the town centre, the long-awaited plans for re-development are unfortunately still awaited. But whenever they come, it will be essential for the Association to draw together from its members their views on the proposals, and to use its corporate knowledge and influence to make an informed judgement on them.

A quick note on more immediate planning: permission is being sought, to build a block in brown/red brick between the Town Hall and Waitrose. You can see the plans at the Civic Centre.

### HERTFORDSHIRE 1981

On display at the Civic Centre during normal office hours, until Friday, 26th May are the plans and a document published by the County Council, giving draft proposals for the County for the next ten years. The document and 'plans are also available at the Library.

### SCHOOLS

At a time when schoolteachers seem to be taking a bit of a caning from their militant pupils in some parts of the country, what news has the Association for tomorrow's citizens?

The progress of the Third Middle School (now to be known as 'Bridgewater School') is being watched with interest by the Association. More than a year ago, we were pressing County for greater speed in finalising the building plans in order that the school should be ready when it is needed - September this year. We shall also be keeping a keen eye on the 'traffic flow' of pupils, to and from the school, when it opens. Members with a concern for pre-school education will have learned of the proposed establishment of a nursery class at the Victoria School. Meanwhile, in Sunnyside, mothers hopeful of sending their five-year olds to Swing Gate Lane Primary School this summer have been disappointed to hear that their children will still be at home until next year - because the school is too small to take them.

### AIRCRAFT NOISE

The sights and sounds of long summer weekends in the garden will, no doubt, be augmented again this year by those of jet 'planes accelerating into the blue. But before you start sticking pins into effigies of Wilbur and Orville Wright, please note that our Representative on LADACAN reports that the Inquiry into the extension of Luton Airport went well. We hope that the Report will find in our favour.

### ROAD SAFETY

Back at ground level, we should like to cast some light on night-time parking, in view of the, many complaints received by the Association. The official rule is, that you may park your vehicle without lights, provided that it is parallel to the kerb on its nearside, at least fifteen yards from any junction, and in a 30 mph. limit. However, it must be stressed that indiscriminate parking in poorly lit areas, busy or narrow roads, is not to be encouraged and also that the rule only applies to vehicles under a weight of 30 cwt.

Parents who park at schools are creating quite a problem and not just in Berkhamsted. The Chief Constable of Derbyshire said recently 'as more and more parents use cars to bring their children, to school, increasing congestion in the vicinity of school entrances becomes a matter for serious concern and can and does create dangers for other children who have to walk'. Which is another way of saying 'Mum and Dad please, use your head, we don't want to come home dead'. So please do not turn in the road outside schools, and those of you who visit the schools on the corners of Cross Oak Road/Shrublands Road and Charles Street/Doctors Commons Road, are asked to take particular care.

Still on the same subject, you may not know of the alterations concerning Road Safety in the town. The County Council will now have overall responsibility but it has been pleased to agree that our Road Safety Committee should continue to function with the financial control vested in the County Council. We still have, therefore, two representatives on the Road Safety Committee.

#### BINGO

The latest turn in the fortunes of the Rex, is the temporary slowing down of the relentless business machine of Star Holdings, Ltd. in its quest to turn the town's only Cinema into a profit-making Bingo Hall. The UDC has decided that parking space is inadequate for such a venture. The real problems, however, are more fundamental - What are the relative Amenity values of Bingo and Films ? To what extent should citizens have a voice in such decisions ? Should the townsfolk have to travel to other towns for entertainment ? and so on. Perhaps members would let the Association know their views on these topics, bearing in mind the fact that not enough people are going to the Cinema to allow it to pay its way.

An interesting sidelight on the proposal to allow films for limited runs of three or four nights a week at the Rex is that the more popular films are often booked out to Cinemas on a fortnightly or weekly basis. This, and other complications may mean that Berkhamsted will have to wait for a considerable time for the more popular films, if they come at all, which would further reduce the viability of the Rex as a Cinema.

#### FOOTPATHS

Moving out of the town and into the country; the Association has linked up with the Chiltern Society to walk footpaths in order to ensure that they are kept free and clear. All paths in Berkhamsted and Northchurch are traversed regularly by a small group of willing volunteers, If you enjoy walking, and would like to do so usefully at the same time, please contact Michael Day. Tel: Berkhamsted 2716.

To enhance the pleasure of your 'constitutional' we have the new edition of the Association's Fieldpath Map ready to sell to you at a very reasonable price. The Map has recently received very favourable reviews in the Hertfordshire Countryside, Youth Hosteller, Rucksack, Thames Valley Countryside and other journals; so to add that extra interest to your day out, the Fieldpath Map is a must. It would also make an attractive and novel gift, particularly to visitors and newcomers to the town. If you would like to purchase one, please contact Mrs. Jean Tookey, 7 Oxfield Close. Tel: Berkhamsted 3951.

#### DEER COUNT

Earlier this year, the Deer Society conducted a deer count at Ashridge and Association members helped to make this event a success. The Deer Society is to be congratulated, particularly as the weather on the day was appalling.

#### BERKHAMSTED DAY CENTRE

The Berkhamsted Day Centre at 16 Manor Street gives elderly and confused persons something to do, and somewhere to go for discussion, companionship and diversional therapy. Most of the helpers are voluntary workers from the WRVS, W.I. and the British Red Cross Society. The Day Centre is planning a holiday for its members in October, costing £500, so far £200 has been collected. Please help by sending a donation to: Mrs. Brazier, Hertfordshire County Council, Social Services Department, Dacorum Division, Town Hall, Hemel Hempstead.

Any-Association member wishing to see the work of the Day Centre on a Tuesday or Thursday, should contact Mrs. Brazier.

There will be a Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy Sale at the Centre on: Thursday. 8th June from 10.50 - 12.30 all proceeds to the Holiday Fund.

#### MOBILE POLICE UNIT

If you want to help fight crime, find out how, at the Mobile Police Unit which will be located in the High Street (near St. Peter's Church) from the 22nd May until the 27th May. Officers specially trained in crime prevention techniques will be available to discuss measures with members of the unit, or to visit them at home or business premises at a mutually convenient date.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

On the Social side, our thanks to members for their appreciative comments on our Meetings and Talks which are proving more and more popular - watch out for notices of this years events, our Activities Committee is lining up some very interesting walks, talks and social gatherings!

Our next event will be a SUMMER RAMBLE on Saturday, 1st July. It will start from the entrance to the CASTLE at 2.30.pm. and should take about 2½ hours. It is hoped to take light refreshment at Rodinghead during the walk and we shall be accompanied by some local experts in flora and fauna to indicate points of interest along the way. You are cordially invited to come and celebrate summer with us, so please put the date, July 1st, in your Diary. If you bring your dog along, please bring his lead.

Our Social Sherry Evening has been postponed until the Autumn, when we hope that the - by then newly-decorated - Town Hall will be an added inducement for you to join us.

Also in the Autumn, Mr. H. Todd, of Bobby Brewster fame, has kindly agreed to come and talk to us about his tour of the Southern Hemisphere. This has been planned for Tuesday, 24th October at 8.00.pm. in the Kings Hall.

The Activities Committee are also lining up talks on the Canal and the Post Office Coding System and leaving time for the important subject, the Town Centre.

### H E L P ! !

#### INFORMATION AND OPINION:

Please contact our Committee Members with suggestions and complaints on town and country affairs. To function effectively, the Association can only work through a dialogue with members.

### The Berkhamsted Festival.

Ushers and Stewards are urgently needed for light work connected with the Son et Lumière at St. Peter's Church in the evenings, between the 30th June and the 15th July, except Sundays. If you are willing to help, in what will become something of an historic event in its own right in Berkhamsted; Please contact Mrs. Tollit, who will be pleased to pass your name on to the Organisers.

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### OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. 1972

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	GEORGE CAMERON	34 CASTLE HILL AVENUE	3774
	MAX STRUTHERS	51 CEDAR ROAD	4345
	MICHAEL DAY	SNELSTON, SHRUBLANDS ROAD	2716
	NORMAN BINKS	22 LOMBARDY DRIVE	6300
	TED MAY	60 GEORGE STREET	
	KATHERLEEN CASSERLEY	RAVENSBOURNE, CASTLE HILL CLOSE	3686
	JEAN TOOKEY	7 OXFIELD CLOSE	3951
	KEN SHERWOOD	42 GAVESTON DRIVE	5158
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