



OCTOBER 1978

We hope, despite the rather poor weather we have experienced this summer, that all our members have enjoyed their summer break. As you would expect, your Committee has not been idle over the holiday period and have arranged some exciting meetings to interest and perhaps fascinate you during the coming months. We believe that they are so good that for the second time we are breaking the traditional format of the Newsletter to place our Activities section on the front page.

ACTIVITIES - Make a note now in your diary

Wednesday, 18th October : Civic Centre : 8 p.m.

The next Lord Mayor of London, Mr. Kenneth Cork, will give a talk on "The City of London". Mr. Cork is a senior partner in the firm of W. H. Cork Gully & Co., well-known London accountants. He is an old boy of Berkhamsted School (1927 - 31) and Chairman of the Board of Governors of Berkhamsted School for Girls and of Berkhamsted School.

A feature of our Autumn and Winter meetings in recent years has been visits by old Berkhamstedians of repute. 'Captures' have included Graham Greene and his brother, Sir Hugh, Antony Hopkins, and Herbert Todd. This year is no exception, so please make an effort to turn up at the meeting and support this important event.

On Wednesday, 15th November at the Civic Centre at 8 p.m. Mr. J. W. Bailey, an Officer of the County Planning Staff at County Hall, will talk on "County Planning - is it worth while?". Mr. Bailey is an interesting, and persuasive, speaker and will come suitably equipped with a projector and some slides, to give us the background on much of the work at County Hall, Hertford.

On New Year's Day, 1979 we shall be issuing our antidote to the Christmas excesses with our annual Ramble. Details will be announced later.

Notices of Meetings You will find notices of our meetings in the Gazette under "What's On", on posters throughout the town, and in the Library Entrance Hall.

Keep Looking!

Berkhamsted Place

Once again a threat to this northern skyline of Berkhamsted in the shape of an outline planning application for 18 houses in the woodlands of the Berkhamsted Place site has occurred. The last time was in 1968, in the First Review of the County Development Plan 1963, when the Minister of Housing and Local Government proposed allocation of the site for residential development. This proposal was thrown out after a Public Inquiry in 1969 and the site is now shown on the County Development Plan as 'no notation' which is taken by the County Council as equivalent to "green belt".

This time opposition came from the people of Berkhamsted (in a petition), the Town Council, the County Council and many other bodies, including, of course, the Citizens' Association. The Dacorum District Council refused the application.

The belt of trees on the skyline is a most important natural boundary to the town with a visual impact far beyond the immediate neighbouring property and it is essential that it should be preserved.

Berkhamsted Castle

Earlier this year some disquiet was caused when it was learnt that the Department of the Environment as part of a programme to reduce costs, were preparing to dispose with resident custodians at some ancient sites and buildings and that Berkhamsted Castle was one of those likely to be affected.

We now understand that as a consequence of strong public pressure against this policy it is likely to be modified and that we in Berkhamsted will retain a Custodian at the Castle.

Yet again, bureaucracy has changed its mind in the face of public opinion.

Public rights of Way: special review of Definitive Map

At the beginning of June we were invited by the County Council to submit claims for amending the Definitive Map. A special feature of this review was the re-classification of all those rights of way hitherto known as "roads used as public paths" into one or another of three existing categories; (1) by-ways open to all traffics: (2) bridleways, and (3) footpaths. The re-classification is not concerned with the physical make-up of any road or track but solely with the rights of the public over it. Thus a green lane may be a "way open to all traffic" though only a lunatic would think of trying to drive an articulated lorry down it: and a tarmac-surfaced, ungated road leading to a farm may be only a footpath to the public.

We have submitted a number of claims to the County Council for correcting or adding to the public rights of way shown on the existing provisional map, We shall know the results only when a draft revision of the provisional map is issued some months hence, when objection may be made to any of the changes proposed.

Brickhill Green

The gypsy problem seems to have left us for the time being; nature is slowly covering up the previous desecration and the harsh and stark mounds of earth fronting the boundaries of the green appear to be carrying out the job for which they were intended. Unfortunately, these mounds have encroached on the rights of way across the Green and members will probably be interested to know that representations have been made to the D.D.C. requesting that the owners make just sufficient room for walkers and rambles to exercise their rights across the Green,

Elections - Public Meetings

The Association's Committee represents the thoughts of the community as a whole and does not directly involve itself in political or controversial subjects, nevertheless it does try to bring together in open meeting the interested parties in order that the various points of view can be placed before the local community at large. During the past two years the Association has arranged an open forum for the local political parties to meet the public but on each occasions the local Conservative Party has declined to take part. Once again, in the past month, it has refused to meet its political rivals in open forum and the Association considers that as the element of debate is lost there is very little point in solely providing a platform for the other political parties to put forward their own political dogma.

Dacorum District Council's policy for the canal

Some eighteen months ago the Council issued a statement of their policy for the canal. This covered the main uses of the canal; boating, walking and angling, and steps which might be taken to increase its usefulness for these purposes and to safeguard and improve its environment (a detailed summary was given in

our May 1977 Newsletter). At the end of May this year the Council called a public meeting in Berkhamsted to discuss how this policy might be carried out on the length of the canal between the Cow Roast and Winkwell; we were represented by members of the Environment Sub-Committee.

As a result of this meeting, the Council set up three study teams (on each of which we are represented) co-ordinated by a Steering Group of Council officials. The function of the teams is to make specific recommendations to the Council for implementing the policy under three heads: (1) responsibility for the maintenance and use of the towpath, which could be taken over by the District Council by agreement with the Waterways Board, (2) facilities needed for the fuller use and enjoyment by the public of the canal, and (3) the preservation and improvement of its environment. At the time of writing the recommendations of the three teams are being drafted for submissions to the Council.

In this connection we should like to hear from everyone interested in boating or canoeing on the canal, with a view to the possible formation of an association of enthusiasts to further their interest. Keen watermen and women should get in touch with Robert Allen, The Grey House, Kitsbury Road, Berkhamsted, 5212, or with Valerie Clark, 329 Bridgewater Road, Northchurch, or Tony Hutchinson, 5 Trevelyan Way, Berkhamsted 4440.

The Beaune Society

House Exchange There is now an exchange organisation in Beaune and we are able to start promoting house exchange and, if anyone is interested in this possibility, please contact The Secretary, Tel. Berkhamsted 4142.

School Exchange The proposed dates for next year's exchange are Tuesday 3rd - 17th April (Berkhamsted to Beaune) and Tuesday 17 - 31st July (Beaune to Berkhamsted) Cost target is £60.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Thursday, 30th November 1978 in the Library, King's Road, Berkhamsted at 8.15 p.m. Under the Constitution, four members of the Committee retire annually in rotation and four nominations are, therefore, invited for these vacancies and, amongst these, we need someone prepared to act as Secretary (knowledge of French is not necessary).

Around and About

You may have noticed that the Council cleared the freezers which until recently were scattered around the premises in Lower King's Road once owned by Farmcost. Incredible as it may seem, the freezers still had rotten meat and other goods in them, left there since the shop closed. We understand that the shop will soon reopen as a carpet and soft furnishings centre.

It will be seen by everyone using the High Street that W. H. Smith are moving to the north side of the street. Again, we understand that Standens Travel Centre will move into Smith's old premises.

Subscriptions

We hate to mention this subject but quite a number of you have not let us have your subscription for 1978. Regrettably we need money to survive and the main source of our income is derived from your subscriptions. It is very easy to forget so we hope that you will not mind being reminded. If there is a cross in the box below it means that we have no record of your payment.

Our Treasurer, Roy Doe, would be pleased to receive your subscription. Please send or take it to him at Lloyds Bank, in the High Street,