



April 1981

Spring is spruz - the grass is riz' etc. So starts the well-known dotty rhyme relating that Mother Nature has come to the regeneration part of her circuit. For, despite Budgets, political memoirs and local crises of confidence, we can take respite in the newness of Springtime, longer daylight hours and fresh green countryside. We have said 'respite' and not 'refuge'; there is a very important difference between the two. This is not the time to opt out. Is there ever one?

Guardians of the Countryside

The Chairman's Report last February, indicated our link with this group who individually 'Keep an eye on' allocated footpaths, ensuring they are kept open and occasionally clearing and way-marking. The annual rubbish clearance is arranged for 28-29 March - without publicity as each Guardian has been contacted and knows what is required and how bagged rubbish will be collected. There are however four small areas with no appointed Guardian and so if the idea appeals to you please contact Tony Hutchinson, 5 Trevelyan Way (Tel. 4440). The duties are merely to walk a few footpaths with your secateurs three times a year and help with each annual clearing.

Easter Monday Ramble (April 20)

Start at 10.30 am at Berkhamsted Station - Return by approx. 3.30 pm. The route is a surprise. Bring your own food but drinks will be provided at a hostelry along the way.

Town Hall

The advertised public meeting was held on 12 March when the Report and Accounts given by the Interim Trustees were accepted. An explanation of the permanent Trust Deed and forward plans was given and the new Trustees appointed. As these have not yet formally met, it is not possible to state their detailed plans. It is clear that a tremendous amount of physical structure work on the Town Hall has been completed as well as 'Constitutional' paper-work and dialogue with the Charity Commissioners. The Town owes a lot to all those who have brought the matter thus far. The next stage is to capture the public mind in Berkhamsted as to what a superb resource this building is. It will take much time and effort to complete but one step at a time it will be done! When the building is accessible to Townspeople generally (maybe this summer) then much more practical support will emerge.

Civic Centre

The building is much used. Is there a night when some meeting or social event isn't is being held? The difficulty of obtaining access other than by long term booking shows how desperately short we are for such amenities and underlines the need for support for the Town Hall project. There were plans to extend out at the rear of the building but this seems to have died as so the plans to tidy-up the eye-sore site to the left hand side of the entrance and have access from Prince Edward Street. Thanks are due however to Councillor Jim Medcalf for arranging the renovation of the Town Coat of Arms. Another case of 'Jim'll Fix It'!. How about fixing the repainting of the black and white road signs at the A41 boundary of Berkhamsted and Northchurch

a) Pelican Crossings

You must have, noticed the variations in timing at the Pelican crossings in the town. At the Rex and at Sanderson's shoe shop you press the button and at once the traffic lights change to amber (provided, of course, that the lights have not been red in the last minute or so). However, it is a very different story at the Post Office and near Cross Oak Road. There the wait is 35 secs. not much, you may say? but what is the result? Pedestrians, on seeing no traffic comings cross without waiting for the green man. Later, frustrated motorists have to stop at a red light, with no-one crossing. This is dangerous on two scores. Children may see adults 'disobeying' the little red man and do likewise and, secondly, motorists may come to disregard the red light. To our mind there is no reason for delay in the lights changing. The traffic hold-up is the same immediately or in 35 seconds. We made representations some time ago and for a brief spell the Post Office lights were changed but have now reverted to the long delay. Cross Oak Road lights have remained consistently slow. This is not the same argument as for a longer 'crossing time' which can be objected to by the Highway authorities as 'interrupting the free flow of traffic on the trunk road'. We are trying again.

b) The road surfacing is alleged to be high priority by the Divisional Surveyor. Look out for action during April, May or ? .

c) Road widening at Box Lane (Boxmoor) will allow improved flow instead of the ancient vite of waiting behind right-turning traffic.

Amenity Site

This is now being built and may be now finished. It does look like a drawing board exercise, however, with little concern for the result. How else do we get the narrow gap for traffic between the corner by the undertakers and the corner of the barricade? We will reserve further comment and see how it actually operates, particularly at weekends. A top-fill facility is required to avoid closing hours and rubbish left on the car-park.

Bulbourne - Canal Fields

This area is affected by the rubbish tip and the committee is pressing Dacorum for a comprehensive assessment, so that car-parking, amenity site and bridging the canal are tackled coherently. If you have views on this please write to Mrs Sheila Walton, 11 Murray Road.

Relations with Dacorum

Recent events have again underlined the fact that relationships between Berkhamsted and the Dacorum District Council have not been satisfactory at a Council or Public level. Councillor Medcalf indicated this at the start of his term as Mayor and, indeed has tried to improve the situation. May others help him! The Association has always had a good relationship with the officers of the Council and we cannot grumble about how our overtures have been dealt with. Always a reply - some more thorough than others - but no problems or access for discussion. However, on actual works and action perhaps we could wish for some evidence that Berkhamsted is getting real attention and real money. We must all make special efforts to get relationships on a more productive basis.

Swimming Pool

The various meetings and their outcome will be history now but they have been historical events with a meaning and purpose. The combined views of groups and individuals has given a clear and unambiguous statement to Councillors that Berkhamsted wants and has to be consulted before important and long term decisions are made affecting a substantial number of people. Much of the sports activities eg. Cricket, Football, Tennis, Squash, Bowling, Golf operate through private clubs - and there is nothing wrong with that but

swimming is an activity that covers all age groups and particularly in this Canal Town is relevant to the safety of children. It is also one of the few activities which families can enjoy together. Berkhamsted is large enough to justify its own all year public pool. The Leisure Services Committee have this aim in view but it is not good management to remove the open air pool before Ashlyns is available. Even then Ashlyns is only appropriate as a learner pool - it is inadequate for full public use. An examination of hours available versus year round user demand is being undertaken in conjunction with the Swimming Association.

The strategy and aims of the Leisure Services Committee may produce results ultimately but the achievement of facilities depends on County financial participation and so, reluctantly, one must conclude that Ashlyns may have to be the site. But the open air pool should be retained and used until the plan stands on committed money from Dacorum and County. It's time Berkhamsted had a bigger and fairer slice of resources. Analysis of Leisure Services Accounts shows the following:-

General Rate Fund Expenditure (Leisure Services)

	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80
Leisure Services Budget				
GRAND TOTAL NET EXP.	£ 0.88m	1.179m	1.202m	1.526m

Net Exp. - Main Items

(a) Administration	85,123	86,267	97,169	170,484
(b) Tring Pool	Not Av.	40,344	39,934	41,831
(c) Old Town Hall, H.H.	40,158	17,605	26,815	27,677
(d) Dacorum Sp. Centre	306,517	300,054	312,164	415,074
(e) Little Hay Golf Course	56,832	63,884	64,649	60,918
(f) Parks & Pleasure Gdns.	<u>227,142</u>	<u>186,389</u>	<u>211,911</u>	<u>257,021</u>
TOTAL (a-f)	715,772	694,543	752,642	973,005
% of GRAND TOTAL	81.2%	58.9%	62.6%	63.7%

Net Exp. Items in Berkhamsted

Berkhamsted Pool	Not Av.	19,907	20,857	25,939
Berkhamsted Civic Centre	Not Av.	14,038	15,037	17,824
TOTAL		33,945	35,894	43,763
% of GRAND TOTAL		2.8%	3.0%	2.9%

Capital Expenditure

1. GRAND TOTAL	359,729	174,975	185,259
2. Others:			
(a) Swimming Pool Tring	80,380	273	
(b) Sports Complex H.H.	108,622	64,738	80,200
(c) Little Hay Golf Course	135,552	56,098	7,619
TOTAL	324,554	121,109	87,819
% of GRAND TOTAL	90%	69%	47%
3 .Berkhamsted Civic Centre	1,232	3,666	15,900
Gable Hall	4,982	190	196
TOTAL	6,214	3,856	16,096
% of GRAND TOTAL	1.7%	2.2%	8.7%

Planning

The Dacorum District Plan has now been published and the Association welcomes its provisions. It embraces some points previously made by us at draft stage. From time to time planning matters arouse conflicting interests among Citizens' members - for instance the alternative routes of the by-pass, the proposed development in Shootersway, near Darrs Lane and now the applications for the resiting of the Berkhamsted Sports Association cricket ground to a site behind Castle Hill and to build forty flats on the football pitch off Lower Kings Road, which in its turn will move to the cricket pitch. The difficulty appears to be that the cricket and football seasons now overlap and it is not possible obviously for the two games to take place simultaneously side by side. The Cricket Club runs four teams. Hence the need to purchase a new site for cricket and, necessarily, the sale of land to provide the cash to pay for it. Whilst appreciating the benefits for the cricket and football clubs, the agreement to build at the Football Ground, raises many fears for building on the precedent, How long will it be before all the site is under attack with the sports facilities using the money to provide other sites for playing on? We probably cannot do better than quote from our letters to the Dacorum District Council, objecting to the two applications.

'Rear of Castle Hill, Cricket Ground, pavilion and parking space'

The site proposed is in an agricultural priority area. According to Herts. County Council policy all leisure pursuits should be in the Amenity Corridor and should only be sited outside when no land inside is available. Therefore to transfer the cricket ground from its existing site, within the Amenity Corridor, into agricultural priority area is contrary to county policy as shown in the Dacorum District Plan. Apart from this, whereas the cricket pitch as such would not be detrimental to the landscape, the cricket pavilion and car park would spoil this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The fact that there is a neighbouring sports ground is not to the point as it is sited in the Amenity Corridor. Inroads into the Green Belt should not be encouraged. Once a principle is breached an undesirable precedent has been created.'

"Land off Lower Kings Road, Residential/Commercial Development"

We object to the above development on the grounds that the strip of land between the railway and the canal from the gasometer's at Billet Lane to Lower Kings Road and then on the other side of the canal, through The Moor to Castle Street, is all open space mainly used for leisure purposes. To start putting residential and commercial development on this site would, we think, detract from the proposed Canal Field development and be detrimental to the overall Town Plan.

Traffic on Lower Kings Road is already heavy and any additional cars would lead to increasing delays and add to the congestion particularly at the Lower Kings Road - A41 junction. At rush hours cars are frequently stationary from the traffic lights back to the canal and beyond. The traffic engendered by the sports use at weekends is not such a problem.

If this development were allowed it would create a precedent and encourage a further application to develop the remaining part of the sports ground.'

As many of you may be keen supporters of either or both clubs we thought you should know the grounds for our objections.

For Your Diary

Tuesday 28 April. - Civic Centre - 8pm 'Gardens to Visit Around Berkhamsted'
- Mrs P. Cunningham

Tree Planting

There are two schemes at the moment in which the countryside committee are involved. The council have been most helpful in planning the types of trees and in their provision. It is hoped that/in both these schemes, each involving over fifty trees, the planting will take place in the Autumn, once agreement by all parties has been finalised. The first scheme is along the canal and the second hopefully on the sky-line of the north-east side of the Town.

Award Scheme

The Environment Award to compliment those whose efforts have improved the town environment was presented to Flambards' at the AGM on 12 February, They have now displayed the plaque on the front of their building over the door in the High Street.

St. Peter's Church Hall was highly commended and commendations were made to 'Millfield Lodge' in Gravel Path and 'Waysmeet' on the corner of Shootersway and Kings Road. Certificates have been presented to all the commended nominations and a separate one to those nominated.

A list of the committee members for 1981-2 is given overleaf.

Entertainment

We would like to draw members' attention to the particularly good programme of entertainment at the Old Town Hall Arts Centre and the Pavilion for the month of April, and to point out that the Berkhamsted Arts Trust to which the Citizens' Association is affiliated, are jointly sponsoring with the Hemel Hempstead Arts Trust a production of Kafka's "The Trial", details as shown below:

THE BERKHAMSTED ARTS TRUST presents THE CHERUB COMPANY

in a first visit to Berkhamsted with their highly acclaimed performance at the Young Vic Studio in London of

KAFKA'S "THE TRIAL"

at the Civic Centre, Berkhamsted, at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 9th April, 1981. Tickets £1.75 from the Civic Centre (£1.50 students and OAPs, concessionary rates for parties of 15 or more) available now.

Two gooks with stockings pulled right over their faces and lips painted ruby red burst into the lodgings of Joseph K Franz Kafka's tormented hero. One giggles convulsively, the other stammers out that K is to stand trial. From that moment this stage adaptation of Kafka's premonition of totalitarianism tightens its grip on the audience until one begins to gasp for air.

Four actors and one actress, a haunting study in sensuality, cover 21 different characters and manage to bring each one to life. The pace is unrelenting and the final scene as chilling as one could hope for.

- Lionel Barber

There will also be two further performances in the Old Town Hall Arts Centre, Hemel Hempstead on Tuesday & Wednesday, 7 & 8 April at 8 p.m.

Berkhamsted Citizens' Association

Committee Members 1981-82

Officers

Chairman	Mr N.A. Binks - 123 High St. Northchurch	6300
Vice-Chairman	Dr. R.C. Parker - Pear Tree Cottage, Berkhamsted Place	5933
Hon. Treasurer	Mr P. Braybrooke - 16 Castle Hill Avenue	4955
Hon. Secretary	Mrs S. Walton - 11 Murray Rd.	5988
Hon. Membership Secretary	Mrs H. Talbot-Ponsonby - 38 Kitsbury Rd.	6300

Committee

Mr G. Clark	The Bothy, Berkhamsted Place	2981
Miss V. Clark	329 Bridgewater Road, Northchurch	01-240-2771
Dr. M. Crawford	14 Gilpins Ride	6209
Mrs M. Cummins	27 North Road	6075
Mr A. Hutchinson	5 Trevelyan Way	4440
Mr G. Moores	44 Gaveston Drive	6783
Mrs T. Rundle	2 Princes Close	6655
Mr D. Smith	c/o Nucleus House, Lower Kings Road	6926
Miss H. Ward	Red Lodge, Graemesdyke Road	74677
Mr R.N. Williams	Brecon, Castle Hill Avenue	4345
Mrs M. Yates	10 Dellfield Close	4010

Sub-committees

Country Amenities

Mr A. Hutchinson	-	Conveners	-
Miss V. Clark			
Mr R. Allen (co-opt)			
Dr. E.G. Parker			
Mrs M. Cummins			
Mrs M. Yates			

Town Amenities

Mr G Moore
Dr M. Crawford
Mrs H. Talbot-Ponsonby
Mr G. Clark
Mr D. Smith
Mrs H. Ward
Dr D. Rance (Co-opt)

Activities

Dr. E.G. Parker
Mr A. Hutchinson
Mrs S. Walton
Mrs M. Cummings

Press/Publicity

Mrs H. Talbot-Ponsonby
Mrs T. Rundle
Mrs H. Ward
Mr P. Braybrooke

Representatives on other bodies

Citizens' Advice Bureau - Mr E.N. Williams
Town Council Road & Home Safety Committee - Mr N.A. Binks
Berkhamsted & Northchurch Community Council - Mr M. Crawford
National Trust) Mr A. Hutchinson and
Chiltern Society) Mr R. Allen

Beaune Society - Mrs M. Yates
Crime Prevention - Mr R.N. Williams
Library) - Mrs H. Talbot-Ponsonby
Planning)

Ladacan - Mr P. Taylor and Miss V. Clark (reserve)
Arts Trust - Mrs M. Yates
Town Hall Trust - Mrs H. Talbot-Ponsonby