



**Berkhamsted  
Citizens  
Association**

# NEWSLETTER

September 1985

Hopes that you have all had a wonderful Summer break are likely to be misplaced! So we can only open this Newsletter by hoping that most of you have been able to arrange a summer break, whether at home or abroad, which has done you some good. A walk along the High Street next Saturday will distinguish those of us who have been abroad from the rest of us - so long as you can tell brown from rust!

## Diamonds are for 60 years

Since our last newsletter, the Diamond Jubilee History of the BCA has been published, in late June. Those members who attended our Summer Wine on 22nd June or who read the Berkhamsted Review, will know of this. However, it is important for all our members to know about this, so we are repeating here the Press Release written by Evelyn Talbot Ponsonby, a past chairman of the Association.

## BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS ASSOCIATION - A DIAMOND JUBILEE HISTORY 1924-1984

Compiled by HUGH GARDNER      Privately printed,      £1.95

"It's a shame; something ought to be done about it."

"Why not join the Citizens Association and help them to put it right."

Hugh Gardner has written a most welcome British history of the first sixty years of one of our local organisation whose principal aim is "to undertake whenever possible any work for the community that can most conveniently be done by a voluntary organisation." Describing how it has done and still does this, he finds the Berkhamsted Citizens Association filling the role of an activator or catalyst. These 67 pages record a considerable history of achievement in many spheres: some subjects have an habit of recurring - the by-pass, traffic and parking problems, and always the countryside, whether Commons, public footpaths or tree planting and preservation. Local politics (with a carefully detached involvement), town planning, amenities, rights, education, all are brought in. One of its memorials might be the number of flourishing organisations to which it has given birth while on its own it has organised crowded public meetings on burning local issues, particularly education.

If this reads like a catalogue, it is simply because the Association's interests are as wide ranging as the requests it receives. It is not an elected body. It aims to work for the benefit of the community, yet its membership is probably less than 5% of the local population. Perhaps Hugh Gardner's book is inevitably a catalogue, but so much more. One would like to know what really went on behind the scenes in some of the negotiations with authority. Tensions must have been considerable at times. Different chairmen have left their individual footprints, but few names appear in this book and rightly so. The modest mentions are well deserved.

Copies of the Jubilee History are available from any member of the Committee, or from The Bookstack, P.C. Birtchnell and Potters Pride . The price to members on production of Membership Card is £1.25, i.e. not £1.95 which is the price for non-members.

#### Further Leisure Developments

Whilst this summer (as opposed to the previous two) has not been good for the heated open air pool, it has been for the growing of the grass on the new bowling green on Canal Fields.

Anyone who has been to Canal Fields will have seen that the construction of the bowling green is now complete. Following the public meeting on 9th July membership applications have been rolling in and there are now some 100 members. A Committee has been formed and various aspects of the club are taking shape. An outline specification for a club house has been prepared. As the membership limit is 125, anyone interested should contact:-  
Jim Riach, 11 The Meads, Northchurch. Tel: Berk. 4214

#### BCA Activities - Dates for your Diary

1st October	"Roman Remains in the Bulbourne Valley". An illustrated talk by Alex Thompson. 8.00 p.m. Sessions Hall.
20th October	Autumn Ramble to Cholesbury . 10.00 a.m. at the junction of Cross Oak Road and Shootersway
Week beginning 28th October	"Roads, plans and people - conflict in our environment". Talk. Actual date to be confirmed. Watch this space - and for posters in the town.
27th November	"How the National Trust cares for our heritage". A talk with slides by a speaker from the Trust. 8.00 p.m. Civic Centre.
13th December	Mince pies, carols, wine and readings for the enjoyment of members. 8.00 p.m. Sessions Hall.
1st January	New Year Ramble to the Bridgewater Arms, Little Gaddesden. 10.30 at the station.

The Northchurch Society have an interesting series of talks planned. Details are:-

Monday September 23rd	Enjoying Food and Drink	Mr. Robertson
Monday October 25th	History of Ashridge	Mr. Bolam
Monday November 25th	Timber - Man's Greatest Debt	Mr. S. Cooper
Monday January 27th	Heraldry	Mr. Graham Ward
Monday February 24th	I went to China	Miss Carr
Monday March 24th	A.G.M. and The 'Work of a J.P.	Mrs. Loxley

All these, meetings will take place in the Parish Room at 8.00 p.m. The A.G.M. will be at 7.45 p.m. Members free. Visitors 30p.

### Musical Taste - Special Dessert

The Berkhamsted Choral Society is a mixed voice choir of some 60 members. They were previously referred to as the Wayfarers Choral Society, and have been active in the West Herts music scene for over 50 years. They particularly want to draw attention to their event on 20th October. This will be Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius", with Tring Choral Society and Hatfield Philharmonic Orchestra. Soloists are Moldwyn Davies (tenor), Jane Findley (contralto) and Carl Murray (bass). It will be held at The Pavilion, Hemel Hempstead on 20th October at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are available from Priscilla Coombs at 8 Castle Street, Berkhamsted (tel: 6627) at £4, £3 or £2, or Flatt & Mead, Estate Agents at 158 High Street, Berkhamsted.

### Typical Scenario - post M.25

We and many others have worries over the effects of the M.25 and hope that the Berkhamsted by-pass will help to dissipate the full impact of the M.25. This outer ring road for London will almost certainly bring pressure for development in West Hertfordshire. We publicise the following extract from the recent minutes of the Hertfordshire Federation of Amenity Societies:-

#### "Lane for housing (and other developments)

The battle between the developers and the conservationists is intensifying. The plan by a group of the country's biggest builders, calling themselves Consortium Developments, to create a number of mini-towns in the south-east has come to a head with a planning application for a new town for 15,000 people at Tillingham Hall near Thurrock in Essex. To house this number it could need 5,000 houses with total land use of up to 1,000 acres. This is only the opening move to break open what they claim to be overly restrictive planning policies in south-east England. A number of such towns are envisaged, all within 30 miles of London, with some possibly in Hertfordshire. The Secretary of State for the Environment has stated that any appeal arising from the refusal of this application would come to him, but he declined in the Commons to anticipate what his decision would be.

Coupled with these developments is the local pressure in Herts where the Housebuilders Federation has won an appeal, to the High Court to overthrow the Herts. C.C. policy of phasing the release of land for building. The County Council is now being forced to reconsider the Policies in the new County Structure Plan in respect of the provision of land for building.

Another fresh development is the batch of proposals contained in the Government White Paper designed to introduce significant changes in the planning system to encourage new businesses as part of the strategy to meet the growing pressure to reduce the present high level of unemployment.

The months ahead will be critical for the future of our county. We urge all our member societies to consider what their policy will be in the face of the now inevitable pressures, even within their own immediate vicinity."

### Youth Club still on the cards

Something down in the forest is stirring - but the forest is not yet giving up its secrets. In plain terms, we hear from several sources that "something will be announced soon" but no-one who knows can tell. The reason often given is that to reveal details, or any facts, would hazard the arrangements. But someone well in the know says that we will all be pleased when we do know. So watch all the spaces, not just this one! It really ought to be emerging soon, if credibility in local councillors and their county colleagues is not to be throttled. We know, however, that negotiations can be delicate, so we had better be patient. The Youth Club, and, those Directly supporting their cause deserve success soon.

### Filling-in

Planning applications observed on the Town Planning Committee Agenda show how the insatiable demand for in-filling and increased housing densities proceeds to affect many areas of the town. Many applications are for extensions to existing properties. A recent meeting had 6 out of 18 as in-filling applications, where plots at the side or rear of existing houses were being built upon. Also the Tunnel Fields Development is to proceed at the rate of 35 dwellings per year up to 109 in total. The distribution in density between this and the Bridgewater Road area is quite remarkable as seen from the opposite side of the valley.

We continue to press for the skyline to be protected from buildings, and for a lower density, so that garden plots and "lungs" can be used to grow trees. These will then over the years break up the solid roof line as at present displayed. It might also make the environment more pleasant for the occupants of the houses! Sometimes we wish the planners and developers would take a longer term view - but the economies of house building and costs of land somehow seem to be all powerful.

When the Association is reported in the local press as "objecting", the reasons are often omitted in the report. The BCA submissions, however, are always based on retaining the character of the area for present and future generations, within a knowledge that nothing ever stays totally unchanged. But there is a difference between change and progress! In planning/development terms we are trying to remind people of this.

### Mr. Neil Cowon

We were very sorry to learn of the death of Mr. Neil Cowan. Neil Cowan was Chairman of Berkhamsted Citizens Association in 1955 and 1956 and our representative on the Road Safety Committee, and was a Life Member of the Association. He contributed a great deal to the Association and to the town and will be greatly missed.

### Town Hall

The Trustees are holding an Open Day at the Town Hall on Saturday 21st September from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. There will be photographs, details of the proposed Phase II refurbishment, original architect's competition drawings and a slide presentation with sound commentary. Coffee will be available in the Sessions Hall during the whole day.