



**Berkhamsted  
Citizens  
Association**

# NEWSLETTER

January 1986

## Better to look forward

As you know, January is named for Janus, the most ancient of the Roman gods, and represented by a double-faced head to signify his knowledge of the present and future. He was also protector of all gateways and entrances, hence the connection with the first month. As one year gives way to another we all seem to have a lot in common with Janus - looking in both directions, at the past, and the future, simultaneously. The trouble with a fixed landmark in the calendar is that it provokes a lot of soul searching and inspires everyone to make - usually irrelevant - comparisons. Unless we really are committed to change how we operate personally, in family or work relationships, at community or country levels, then the past is irrelevant. The brutal truth about 1985 is that it is past history. An even more brutal truth is that 1986 is like every other new year; it is a totally unknown quantity. The people who will be really successful in this, and any other now year, are those who treat it as an adventure, an opportunity to benefit from the experiences of the previous twelve months. It may also be useful to give a nodding acknowledgement to the experiences of some previous years. But to look back only? As a modern song says "a fool can lose tomorrow looking back at yesterday". Much of our lies in a resistance to change, a reluctance to adapt to new demands and circumstances. Janus may have been two faced, but at least he kept one of them firmly turned towards the future.

## Cherish the past

The above philosophy doesn't mean we rubbish or ignore the past - on the contrary, we just learn and build both on the best of the past and its mistakes. Too much absorption with the past, as an obsession, can be very dangerous. Berkhamsted has at times seemed too much in love with the past to the detriment of its life in the future. The development of its urban edge, the arguments about infilling of the many large houses, the destruction of trees, the building on leisure sites - all have created arguments based on fear of losing the inheritance from the past. Quite rightly people are apprehensive of the pace of change and the sweeping away within a short period of the "character" of an area. However, perhaps we have learned to a degree how to balance the needs of the present with the needs of the past and its inheritance. The town is changing - and will continue to do so - it's a question of pace, style and judgement on compatibility with what we know and wish to cherish.

## Leisure changes and needs

A survey of leisure services needs shows Berkhamsted to have a slightly higher percentage of older people (55 years plus) than other areas of Dacorum. This analysis is very important in assessing leisure needs among others. The new Bowling Club will largely cater for the more mature end and it is heartening to know how well it is going for launch day in 1986. It is also good to know of the splendid support from Dacorum Leisure Services - an excellent co-operative effort between enthusiastic "volunteers" and professional local authority staff. All prospective members should have paid a £15 initial deposit to the club by 1st February. 150 members is the likely achievement. The club green has now been constructed, and

plans for a club house are under way. Annual subscription for the year 1st April 1986 to 31st March 1987 will be £20. Opening day is planned for Saturday 3rd May.

The general area of Canal Fields, with its developing new trees, childrens leisure area, the bridge, refurbished houses, resurfaced car park, and picnic tables, is one of the success stories of recent years, when action has been taken with the future very much in mind.

#### Towards 1988 - Leisure

The recent announcement that £200,000 has been agreed by Dacorum Council for Ashlyns Leisure Centre is also a welcome commitment to the future. Whilst not regarded by some as an ideal site because it is "up the hill" rather than in the town centre area, i.e. at Canal Fields, Ashlyns is accepted by most people as being the only economically viable location. Being at the school site it can be dual financed by Herts County and Dacorum, and the economics of any other site are not as good whether as capital investment or on running costs. There are clearly some disadvantages to being up Chesham Road, particularly for elderly people, mums with prams, and those without cars, but it is within convenient walking distance of Hall Park, Ashlyns Estate, Shootersway, top end of Cross Oak Road. Being used in the daytime by the school(s) and by the public at weekends and evenings, it is a facility giving maximum utilisation.

#### Towards 1988 - By-pass

Our local MP's deserve thanks for their continuing pressure on the Department of Transport for a firm date for the start of the by-pass. A recent Commons answer gave 1988 as the likely start date with a 2-year period for completion. It also now appears that Department of Transport data on traffic movements makes a dual carriageway likely - rather than an ordinary two track road like the A41. This story is becoming a little cliff-hanger. Will it happen or not - listen to next month's thrilling instalment. However, with the M25 nearing completion at Kings Langley, and the Tring motorway lying in lonely splendid isolation, who can doubt that the gap in the map will be filled fairly soon? Now that will be some future - a High Street one can walk across safely and without delay.

#### Towards 1988 - The Town Centre (Jungle Area)

This is another long running saga, although some extra car parking has been agreed as an extension of the existing Lower Kings Road car park. Following an initiative by the Association in 1979, and action by the then Chairman of Dacorum Development Committee, a plan was drawn up and agreed in the early eighties. Since then - silence. Well, these affairs do need some time to organise, and the Council has acquired much of the land. However, it would be heartening to know that soon the Jungle Area (separating the Lower Kings Road car park, and St. Johns Well Lane car park) will be removed and used to public advantage. It certainly is doing nothing for anyone at present.

#### Various items from Dacorum Borough Council

- (a) Bottle Banks These are clearly successful as Rockware Glass has presented the Council with a Certificate of Commendation for having achieved 3,500 tons of glass through the Bottle Bank scheme. It is not clear over what period, or which areas seem to have most empty bottles to recirculate! It might make for some socially interesting information! It is all in a good cause, however, as

the money goes into the Bottle Bank Amenity Fund, which is dispensed to aid worthy causes. Examples of recent expenditure are:-

Bennetts End Hospital - Summer House for mentally handicapped (£500).

Rotary Club ( Hemel Hempstead) - "Life Pak" immediate aid for heart attack victims (£5,127).

National Childbirth Trust - electrical breast pumps.

St. John's Ambulance (Tring) - refurbishment of two trolley stretchers (£125)

- (b) Gossoms End £1.137 million for 25 houses and 10 flats. Gossoms End Hospital Project - £60,000 for preliminary works. The hospital is principally for care of the elderly.
- (c) Health Committee has recommended that new bye laws be adopted to control the burning of straw and stubble. These are to be cleared by the Home Office and then be enforced.
- (d) Demolition of unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area has been agreed adjacent to 36 Lower Kings Road.

Demolition of unlisted building and erection of 3 storey office buildings at 11 Lower Kings Road (old Post Office building) has been refused on grounds of inadequate vehicle access and inadequate car parking. It was also felt that "The proposals will prejudice the implementation of the Lower Kings Road/High Street rear service road proposed in the Berkhamsted Town Centre May 1973. Lower Kings Road is an important shopping street in the town centre and any proposal to re-develop the site should make provision for retail use of the ground floor frontage. The proposed building, because of its mass, form and elevations would result in an over-dominating element when viewed from Lower Kings Road and other surrounding areas and would detract from the character and appearance of the Berkhamsted Conservation Area."

#### Annual Environmental Award

Decisions on this will be announced after the A.G.M. On 18th March. AS usual, slides of the nominations will be shown together with commentary on the major features taken into account.

Nominations are:-

1. "Compass\*", old peoples residential development at New Road, Northchurch
2. Livery painting to Canal Bridge, Lower Kings Road.
3. Broadwater Flats, Lower Kings Road (adjacent to Shaw & Kilburn).
4. New flats, Bridge Street (adjacent canal).
5. Conversion to dwellings Ravens Lane/George Street corner,
6. New railings and floodlighting Nos. 111, 113, 117 High Street.
7. Waitrose new frontage.
8. Dickmans Chemist shop front - High Street.

9. New archway adjacent to No. 16 Kings Road.

10. Eight houses top end of Ashlyns Road (adjacent playing fields).

#### Grand Union Canal

Our Town Amenities Group has surveyed the area of the canal through Berkhamsted. The report and recommendations for action have been sent to British Waterways Board and Dacorum Borough Council.

#### Hall Park site for W.H. Smith?

A letter has been sent to Dacorum Borough Council pointing out reasons why a D.I.Y. warehouse would not be appropriate to the area along the A41 at Hall Park adjacent to the petrol station.

#### Activities - Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Wednesday 19th February	Local Ombudsman – His Work – Your Grievances. 8.00 p.m. Old Hall, Berkhamsted School, Castle Street, Entrance.
Tuesday 18th March	A.G.M. Plus Annual Environmental Award. Talk by Bernard Walden, Director of Leisure Services, Dacorum Borough Council, followed by Open Forum on Matters of Local Concern. 8.00 p.m. Sessions Hall
Monday 31st March	Easter Monday Ramble. 10.00 start at Berkhamsted Station. Lunch break at the Valiant Trooper, Aldbury.
Wednesday 23rd April	Forum! Education at the Cross Roads Several contributors from the field of education. 8.00 p.m. Sessions Hall.
Friday 20th June	Summer Wine. Victoria School. 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

#### Town Hall Trust activities

Sunday 13th April	Car Boot Sale, Lower Kings Road. (Please contact Ian Scott on Berkhamsted 4121 for details)
Monday 14th July to Saturday 26th July	House to House Collection (Please contact Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby on Berkhamsted 5882 for details)

#### Membership Subscriptions

The time has arrived again to renew your subscriptions. The cost of membership remains at a minimum of £1 per individual and £1.50 per family subscription. Of course, you are welcome to give more than the minimum. Please pay your newsletter deliverer or to Hazel Ward at Red Lodge, Graemesdyke Road or to Lloyds Bank (be sure to fill in a pay-in slip). Membership cards should be delivered to you with the next issue of the newsletter.