

# THE CITIZEN

The Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association



March 1997

## Profile - Peter Braybrooke



Peter Braybrooke is BCA's Treasurer (Honorary, of course, as are all our officers) and has held that position from the time he was persuaded to take it on - only shortly after he joined the Association in 1980.

We are very fortunate in being able to call upon wide expertise from within our own ranks for nearly all the functions that need to be performed to keep the Association moving smoothly forward. Peter is a good example of this. His quiet and efficient management of our income and expenditure is one reason why we are able to keep the annual subscription so low.

Peter is a chartered accountant and was senior partner in his firm before he retired.

His roots are in Watford where he was educated at Watford Grammar School. He was a member of Watford Round Table and is a member and past president of the Rotary Club of Watford. He has been married to Jean since 1965.

Peter has always been a keen follower of cricket and is a member of the MCC. Classical music, particularly opera, is one of his major relaxations.



*Chairman & Editor at the switching on of Berkhamsted's Christmas lights.*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given that the 73rd Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held in the Wellcome Great Hall of Berkhamsted Town Hall on Thursday, 20th March 1997, at 8.00pm.

NOMINATIONS for the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Membership Secretary, Hon. Auditor and Committee Members should be submitted to the Secretary not later than 24 hours before the AGM. Consent of the person nominated must be obtained previously.

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last AGM.
3. Chairman's Report.
5. Election of Officers.
6. Election of Committee Members.
7. Election of Hon. auditor.

After the formal business of the AGM, an appreciation will be made of the entries for the Environment Award.

Following a break for coffee there will be a short talk by Mr Graham Petts of Dacorum Borough Council about close circuit television cameras to be installed in the Town; and then, an open Forum.

## Membership

At the beginning of this year the Berkhamsted Citizens Association's membership amounted to 605 households, with a total of 1104 members, all of whom are of course entitled to come to our meetings and to vote at the AGM.

New members may join at any time. Annual subscriptions remain at the remarkably low figure of £1.50 for an individual and £2.00 for a couple (and children under 16). Five year subscriptions are £7.50 and £10.00 respectively. Why not pass your copy of The Citizen on to a friend and suggest they might like to join?

# Other Forthcoming Events

**Sir Christopher Walford**, recently **Lord Mayor of London** and who lives in Berkhamsted, has agreed to come and talk to the Association about his year in the Mansion House. This will be take place in the **Great Hall** in the Town Hall on **27th February 1997 at 8.00 pm**.

**10th April (Thursday)**

## **Mudlarking in the Thames**

An unusual view of London's history from objects found in the Thames.  
An illustrated talk by **Peter Clayton F.S.A.** **8.00pm** in the **Great Hall**, in the Town Hall.

**18th May (Sunday)**

**Morning walk around Northchurch** with **Bert Hozier**. Meet outside the 'George & Dragon', Northchurch at **10.30am**.

**28th June (Saturday)**

**Summer Wine** will be held this year at **Berkhamsted Hockey Club**.  
**Lockhart Field, Northchurch, 8.00pm** (Members Only).

## Rural Corners: *Brickhill Green*



It is often said that Berkhamsted is short of open spaces. This may be so if we define the town as what is contained within the built-up area; but in fact no able bodied person who lives in Berkhamsted is more than a few minutes walk from open country, over much of which there is good public access.

I was reminded of this the other day walking through Brickhill Green, a modest piece of public open land by the side of Chesham Road just before it crosses the bypass. Long ago it may have been an open green,



but now it is a pleasant little oasis of woodland with tall beeches and oaks. I suspect it is not much used by the public, surrounded as it is on three sides by 'A' roads with the roar of traffic on and on the fourth by the silence of Kingshill Cemetery.

*A path through  
Brickhill Green Wood*

It has recently received some improving treatment by the Borough Council Woodlands people for which they deserve congratulations. The paths have been well tidied up, and the pond has been cleaned and opened up to the sky. One of the old features of the site is no longer to be found on Brickhill Green, though: the gypsies.



*Brickhill Green Pond: opened up*

## SAFETY AND CHANNEL 5

'*Herts is Still the Safest County*' was a recent banner headline on the front page of the Gazette. Violent crime is lower in Hertfordshire than in any other county in England; we also have the seventh lowest level of overall crime and the fifth lowest burglary rate. The local police aim to reduce all these by 5% in their 1997/8 Policing Plan. This is rather comforting news for those of us who live here; but the police warn of the need for continuing vigilance.

Most readers will be aware that their television sets may need adjusting in connection with the coming of Channel 5, the new, free television station. This may well entail an employee of Channel 5 calling at your house to re-tune your set, and there is some concern that this will give the opportunity for bogus callers to get in. The following information has therefore been issued for our guidance:

## CHANNEL 5 - RE-TUNING OPERATION

**THE RE-TUNER WILL NOT TAKE ANY EQUIPMENT AWAY FROM THE HOME OR DISMANTLE IT.**

**Security Measures.** To deter bogus callers, Channel 5 has adopted the following code of practice.

1. **To circulate leaflets and information before making house calls.**
2. **Give householders a unique security code which can be verified.**
3. **Make appointments for re-tuning where possible.**
4. **RE-TUNERS TO WEAR CLEARLY BRANDED CLOTHING.**
5. **RE-TUNERS TO CARRY IDENTITY CARDS.**
6. **PROVIDE TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND PASSWORDS TO CHECK RE-TUNERS IDENTITY.**

The distinctive clothing will have the words 'Give me 5' prominently on the shirt and jacket. Householders can verify a re-tuner's identity by telephoning the security Helpline number: 0500 555955.

## Town Amenities

**Gordon Bluck,** *Chairman of our sub-committee reports:*

I have been Chairman of the Sub-Committee for four or five years and in that time I have not known it so busy in planning terms, with our last meeting finishing at 10.15 pm. I rely on my colleagues to give me expert advice. I do not give praise lightly but the members of the committee serve the Association well and I would like to thank them for their hard work.

We objected, as it turns out successfully, to another development at Fleurfield in Kingsdale Road. Continued infill development is understandable but we believe not good for the town. Turning to the more important things, the following have been considered by us:-

- 1) We have Colin Garrett as not just our planning representative but also as our 'Man' on the 'Town Forum' - a group dedicated to improving the town.
- 2) The committee are not happy with the situation regarding the catalpa tree in Lower Kings Road. It is difficult to understand how a specimen tree can be lost and the replacement tree put in another place to apparently suit commercial needs. We will continue to support the town's history.
- 3) The BCA has been asked to be involved in the important discussion regarding the AgrEvo site, and we are of the view that low cost flats are the best answer for the site. Our detailed response can be obtained from me



*Berkhamsted's new Waitrose.  
A candidate for an Environment Award*

4) This year for a change there were a good number, in fact 21, nominations for the environment award and it has been difficult to reduce them to a short list; but they are as follows:

The ex Castle Pub Development  
The Swan  
The Moorings  
Railings and lights, Station Road  
New Offices, Boxwell Road  
Sunnyside Rural Trust Building  
Kingsgate  
Development at Holliday Street  
The 'Dump' Waste Transfer site  
Extension to Evangelical church  
Extension to 7 Meadow Road



*Another Environment Award possibility:  
extension to a house in Meadow Road*

5) We have commented at some length regarding the Development Plan Review to 2011 in which we pointed out that we would wish as a matter of principle to avoid the loss of Green Belt as it sets a precedent. Out of the three sites, we find the New Road, Northchurch, site acceptable, with the Bank Mill lane site acceptable if it does not extend into open fields. Regarding the Durrants Lane/Shootersway sites, the land between Woodcock Hill and Chaucer Close is acceptable but all the other areas further up the hill are not acceptable due to skylining and loss of school playing fields.

6) My Minutes Secretary Margaret Phillips who has served on the Town Amenities Sub-committee for twelve years has decided to stand down and she will be sadly missed. Her hard work and speed in doing the minutes have made my job as Chairman so much easier. I would like on behalf of the Association to thank her for the vital work she has done. She of course is heavily involved with activities too and this will continue, as will her work on the main committee. Margaret - a big thank you.

## Stop Press

While finishing this report I have been told by DBC planning that regarding the catalpa tree, the sign has been erected on DBC land with approval of the Development Control committee to guide the delivery lorries off Lower Kings Road rather than getting them lost round the station. Also the entrance had to be made on advice from the Highways Department and the tree will have to go behind the sign. A shame but we tried.

## Street Name Boards

The Borough Council has agreed not to put up their yellow and green street name boards in Berkhamsted's conservation area, but one has appeared in Montague Road. 'A mistake', says the Council. 'We will replace it with a black and white one.'



## Conservation Area Partnership

Under the Conservation Area Partnership for Berkhamsted one of the proposals is a 'clutter survey', to schedule some of the things which clutter up the streets of the town and then try to do something about it.

Certainly as far as the High Street is concerned clutter seems to increase week by week. Much of it is to do with advertising in its broadest sense, both public and private.

Obviously a great deal of this advertising is important for providing public information and to help businesses to be successful, but badly done and in excess it can have such a harmful effect on the appearance of our town.



*Advertising hoarding on a 'listed' building*

Sports events such as Test matches are vulgarised and disfigured by advertisements, even including appallingly badly designed ones on the England cricketers' shirts. Our town has also suffered; estate agents' boards like everywhere else; 'A' boards all along the High Street on the pavement; giant hoardings. An unfortunate recent addition is the rash of water valve markers which have sprung up all over the town.



*A rash of blue water valve markers*

Clutter is of course not confined to the Conservation Area. In other streets some of it is associated with traffic calming. Can we expect that when the doomed pinch points in Bridgewater Road are removed the new traffic calming features, with all their signing and bollards, will be less obtrusive than what is there now?



*A doomed pinch point in Bridgewater Road*

Let's hope that the clutter survey gets off the ground and eventually leads to

a noticeable improvement in the appearance of Berkhamsted by getting some of this unsightliness removed.

## Doorways in the Town

*Houses (now offices) in the High Street*



Like most old market towns Berkhamsted has a number of houses from the 18th and 19th centuries which are essentially fairly plain brick structures but having prominent doorways which add distinction and character to them. Builders would take the designs for these from builders' manuals, ensuring that the proportions were correct. Later attempts to imitate these features are nearly always carelessly done and unsuccessful.



*The Dower House*



*Boxwell House*

If you are interested look out for good examples particularly in the High Street east of Chesham Road and in Chapel Street. Those opposite St Peter's Church look particularly fine in the floodlighting.

From some buildings the doorways have disappeared or have been mutilated. Wouldn't it greatly improve the town if money could be found to restore these?

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