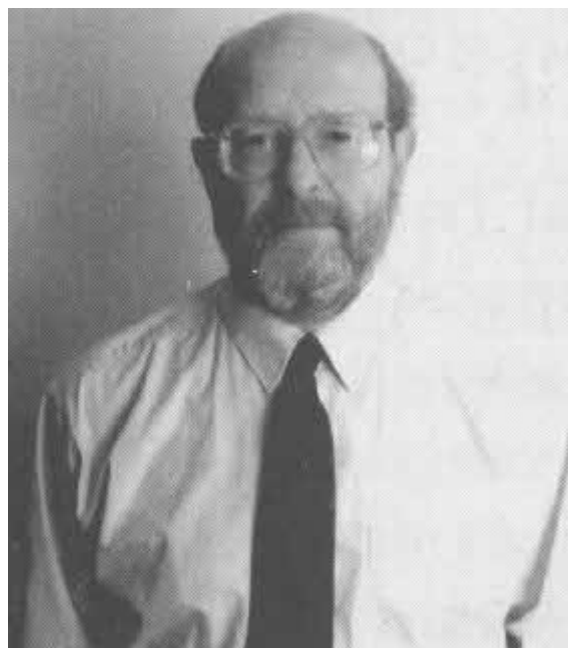


The Citizen



Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

September 2005



David Brunt

An appreciation by Gordon Bluck

As some of you will know David Brunt died very suddenly earlier in the summer which was a great shock to all of us who had the privilege to know him.

He came to Berkhamsted in 1979 and was a Civil Engineer by profession working for Arup who he stayed with for all his career. Married to Joan with 3 children he was very much a family man but could always find time to help other people and organisations within the town. His help was with principally All Saints church and of course this Association.

He joined the main BCA committee in 1984 and served right through 21 years till his death, which is one of the longer terms in living memory. He was a much respected and devoted Vice Chairman for 3 years from 1995. His work on the Town Amenities Sub Committee was his real forte where he organised the annual Environment Award which is so important to the town. The ceramic or in the case of the canal, metal plaques awarded are a feature of the town will stand out in memory of David. We will remember his dedication to the project through his informative presentations at the AGM each year. Clearly showing how an individual committee member could make a real difference to the town and the BCA. He was a caring man who will be remembered for so many good things he has done for Berkhamsted.

Thank you David.

Letter to the Editor

Norman Cutting, writes:

In response to my comment in the last issue regarding the proposed development on the land adjacent to the George Street play area, I have received a ticking off from Berkhamsted West Borough Councillor, Ian Reay.

He writes:

Dear Sir,

It is stated in the last edition of your Newsletter that the proposal to construct affordable housing units at Little Bridge Road will encroach on the childrens' play area on the corner of Little Bridge Road and George Street. May I assure your readers that this is not the case.

A site will be transferred to the Aldwyck Housing Association to enable a development of four one-bedroom flats. Three of these will be for shared ownership and one unit will be for rent. However, the site that is to be used is a small piece of derelict land and none of the land that forms the play area will be used.

I enclose a map which shows the land use.

Yours Sincerely,

Ian Reay,
Borough Councillor,
Berkhamsted West Ward

Ian is the portfolio holder for planning in the Borough Council Cabinet and kindly allowed me to reproduce part of the location map to prove that the site will not encroach on the play area.



If you have any comments on Berkhamsted happenings or suggestions for the newsletter, then why not drop us a line?

Activities Sub-Committee

Rita Jones - Chairman reports:

The 2005/6 program should be included with this edition of the Citizen. It opens on Thursday October 8th with 'The Lighter Side of Stained Glass'. The speaker, Alfred Fisher, has considerable experience with stained glass from his work at Whitefriars Studio and Chapel Studio, Kings Langley. This promises to be an amusing and entertaining opening to the new season. Hugh Davies, guide, lecturer and researcher at Bletchley Park Museum, will follow this, on Thursday, November 10th with a talk, intriguingly titled 'The Ancient Art of Deception'.

The Summer Walk on Sunday 17th July was, sadly, poorly attended, probably because this was a late addition to the program, following the success of the New Year's Day ramble. The posters were not a sufficient incentive, but Bill Willett, who we thank very much for leading the walk, was not deterred, and would like to try again next summer. Therefore we shall have two rambles next year, on Sunday, January 1st and Sunday, July 2nd.

Routes will be announced in the Citizen, at meetings and on posters, nearer these dates.

Last, but not least, the annual BCA Seasonal (formerly 'Christmas') Celebration. Timetables in December are often overloaded, so we have changed the date to Saturday, January 21st. As this is close to the anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns (January 25th 1759) we thought a Burns' supper might be fun, with additional entertainment from the Jolly Jazzers. We have booked the Sessions Hall, which should provide a friendlier atmosphere than the vast Great Hall of recent years. To help with catering, tickets will be sold in advance. Arrangements are being finalised and details will be given in the next Citizen. We hope you will make a note of the date and come with your friends.

All meetings this year will be at 8.00pm in the Sessions Hall.



Charles Street

Profile on.....

Norman



Binks

Norman was elected to committee at this year's AGM and has been nominated to the Town Amenities sub-Committee and to be our representative on CARP (Canal and River Project). This is a natural, as he has been with wife Audrey, a Narrowboat owner since the mid 80's. As such, they have boated along most of the navigable canals and rivers in England, and have learned a little about our natural flora and fauna - but not yet been tested for his Romany badge!. They came to Berkhamsted in 1966 living in the Hall Park area but moved to a Victorian house in Northchurch in 1977.

Norman was on the BCA committee for several years from mid 70's and was Chairman in 1980 and 81, being Vice Chair in 1979 and 82. He was very much into waymarking local footpaths and helping the Guardians of the Countryside. Also, as Chairman, he started a less confrontational dialogue with the Town and District Council, a policy since continued. This may not grab the headlines but improves influence behind the scenes. The fight in 1981 for the open air swimming pool to be not demolished until new facilities were created led ultimately to the creation of the Leisure Centre at Gossoms End, and the birth of the Bowls Club by Canal Fields.

In mid 80's Norman left the committee due to demands of his career in Industrial Relations in BEA at Ruislip and LHR, being very much involved with the organisational/ Trades Union details of the merger between BEA and BOAC, and subsequently with the BA merger with British Caledonian. In 1989 he joined the fledgling Emirates Airline in Dubai to be Human Resources Manager.

1998 saw Norman and Audrey back in Northchurch when he was asked to become Secretary to the Berkhamsted Arts Trust on the sudden death of Jeff Edwards, who had done the job for more than 20 years. During the 2 years he was Secretary, and together with Liz Wood, the current annual "Arts in Berkhamsted" diary was developed and now hits every letter box in HP4 to advise the August - May programmes of more than 20 organisations in the area.

Norman is also a member of the Berkhamsted Crime Prevention Panel, encouraged to join by another BCA past Chairman, Norman Williams. There are now 3 Normans on the BCA Committee, ie Messrs Binks, Cutting, and Williams. Must have been a popular name sometime!



From my archives

- Top left: Ravens Lane looking through the old cobblers shop in Provident Place.
- Top Right : Coopers High street offices
- Bottom Left : Coopers loading bay from the Rising Sun.

Town Amenities Sub-Committee

Gordon Bluck, TASC Chairman reports:

Since I failed to do report in last newsletter, not that any of you noticed, I have quite rightly been reminded by the newsletter editor to make sure I do it this time.

Turning to what has occupied us over the last few months, we took an early opportunity to write to David Gauke our new MP regarding the poor state of our local roads.

He wrote and received a reply from John Wood the Environment Director of the County Council which although it stretched to a page and a half said virtually nothing. They apparently use a sophisticated Highways Asset Management Programme (HAMP) which targets the roads which if untreated will cost more if left. In Berkhamsted our roads are structurally sound so no work at the moment. What happened to the good old measuring stick for potholes. In Wales where I have a holiday home there is never an uneven surface and certainly no potholes.

On planning matters we objected to the redevelopment of Bulbourne House in Gossoms End for 56 apartments as we felt it was overdense, lacked enough car parking and the access road to the rear should be on the Edgeworth House side. We also felt that a more innovative frontage should be a feature.



'Bobbys' previous signage



Mock Tudor shops in High Street

What does your committee get up to?

Norman Cutting rambles:

It has been suggested (not for the first time), that I include some information in the newsletter about what your association committee gets up to.

We have representatives on many local organisations and I try to bring you a selection of reports from our representatives including Crime Prevention, CARP, Community Partnership, Environment Forum, CAB, BTHT and the Graham Greene Trust to name just a few. Most of our monthly meetings receive reports from at least half our representatives, but with only four pages every 3 or 4 months, something has to give.

Subsequently the plan was withdrawn at the suggestion of the Borough Council for very similar reasons. We strongly objected again to a new proposal for 16 flats at Rose Cottage 17 Bank Mill Lane on the grounds of massive over development in an already narrow road with a very narrow canal bridge.

Similarly the proposal for 6 flats at 11 Bank Mill Lane met with our opposition and we objected on the same lines. Concerning the retrospective application to retain the new sign at Bobby's Convenience store we felt this was totally out of keeping with other signs in the area and the conservation area. It should be replaced with a sign with one colour, not stripes.

You will no doubt have seen the display in the Civic Centre regarding the Borough Council to submit a Supplemental Planning Document for the Stag Lane site. We felt that we could support the principle but wondered if some small convenience store could be included, due to the large number of dwellings suggested. This document is not a planning application but a starting point for what the planners would wish to see on the site. The owners, Tesco still own the site, but as we know the planning inspector turned down the large new store. As always, if members want to bring things to our attention, phone me daytime 01462 445671 or evenings and preferably weekends 01442 873548.

Currently, our minds are concentrating on supporting the campaign to save West Herts Hospital - sorry Hemel Hempstead General Hospital - in Hemel and a small group of us are actively looking into how your Association can best assist in ensuring we retain and improve our 'local' facility.

Space permitting, more information in our next issue.

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