



# THE COCKPIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

*The Cockpit, on Chislehurst Common, has been the traditional meeting place for Chislehurst people on all great occasions from time immemorial.*

*Chairman:* T. A. Bushell, A.M.Inst.T.  
*Vice-Chairman:* Alistair Gunn, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G.  
*Hon. Treasurer:* Alex Drage, A.H.A.

*Hon. Secretary:*—Mrs. M. S. Holt,  
13 Oakleigh Park Avenue,  
Chislehurst, Kent.

No. 5

November, 1968

**Leesons—St. Paul's Cray Roundabout:** A Town's Meeting will be held at Chislehurst Public Library at 8.0 p.m. on Friday, 29th November, to discuss a number of local problems, first among them being the proposed roundabout at the junction of Leesons Hill and St. Paul's Cray Road. The desirability, or otherwise, of this proposal was discussed at a crowded public meeting called by the Commons Conservators earlier this year, which meeting, by a unanimous vote, expressed its disapproval.

Your committee has since gone fully into this question and the following facts emerge:—

(1) St. Paul's Cray Road is a Borough Principal Road (A.208) for which the Borough Council is the highway authority.

(2) The Ministry of Transport states that the Minister would make a grant for the improvement of this road but "before issuing a grant our engineers examine the scheme to ensure that conditions make it necessary, that it meets modern requirements and provides good value for money . . . apart from this measure of control the Minister has no power to interfere".

(3) The cost is understood to be between £50,000 and £60,000.

It is clear from the above that the primary decision rests with our Borough Council and it is, therefore, essential that the residents of Chislehurst should make their views clearly known.

This Association advocates treating Chislehurst and St. Paul's Cray Commons as an area of natural beauty and recreational benefit, not only to the immediate residents, but to the many visitors who come to enjoy it. This roundabout would swallow nearly an acre of

**TOWN'S MEETING**  
*Methodist Church Hall*  
**CHISLEHURST PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**FRIDAY, 29th NOVEMBER, 1968**  
at 8 p.m.

*To discuss:*

**Roundabout — St. Pauls Cray Road**  
**The Rates**  
**Sheppey Airport**  
**Water Tower Seat, &c**

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The Member of Parliament and the Chislehurst  
Councillors have been invited to attend.

common land and we fear that this would be the "thin end of the wedge" for the Borough Surveyor has written to us in the following terms: "In view of the continually increasing traffic volumes which can be expected to use this road in the future there is little doubt that in its present form it will be unable to accommodate the ultimate predicted traffic flows, and will at some future date require widening to four lanes or possibly dual carriageway standard".

## ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

By A. N. Oldun



The Duchess of Albany in Chislehurst High Street, for the official opening of Albany Road, 29th June, 1898.

There are still a few residents who remember a very special occasion in June, 1898, when H.R.H. The Duchess of Albany paid a colourful visit to Chislehurst.

The Royal visitor was received at Chislehurst railway station by Sir George Chubb (later Lord Hayter) who was

the chairman of a fund to help the people of Deptford. After a short service in the parish church the party proceeded, with a mounted escort of the West Kent Yeomanry, across the commons and down the High Street to a former cul-de-sac that was now extended through from Red Hill to Green Lane and re-named Albany Road. The newer part (by the present R.C. church of St. Patrick) crosses the site of the former Red Hill Farm whose horse pond (where the Co-operative Stores and Lionel Davis's shops now stand) was filled in in the following year by the simple process of lowering the top of White Horse Hill and tipping the earth into the old pond.

The procession now re-crossed the commons to Camden Place at the gates of which a guard of honour had been mounted by a local detachment of the Cinque Ports Artillery. (Chislehurst was never a Cinque Port, but the late Earl Sydney was Captain of Deal Castle, hence the detachment based at Froggnal).

At Camden Place there was a varied programme, with a gymnastic display and other entertainment, all to the music of a Guards Band. During the afternoon the Duchess received purses of money from the school children and donations from the older folk.

The Albany Institute, built largely with the aid of the Chislehurst Fund, still stands at Deptford.

This is clear enough—a speedway cutting both commons into two halves! As an alternative, we have consistently advocated the improvement of the Sidcup Bypass as a means of reducing the traffic on St. Paul's Cray Road, Orpington Road and Leasons Hill, and we are pleased to report that the Ministry of Transport on 28th August wrote: "It would appear from your letter that the members of your Association consider the A.20 (Sidcup Bypass) is inadequate to cope with present day traffic. You will therefore be glad to learn that it is proposed to improve the trunk road to modern standards by the provision of dual carriageways throughout its length from the Swanley Bypass to the Greenwich Borough Boundary. The final line has not yet been decided though several alternatives are now under examination. This scheme is in the preparation pool of schemes announced by the Minister and will do much to divert traffic from the Chislehurst area".

The traffic congestion at the proposed roundabout site is for short periods only at the morning and evening rush hours. A wider Sidcup Bypass will reduce this. Can there now be any justification for decimating the commons

and absorbing so large a sum of public money? We think not, and our views are shared by the Central Orpington Residents Association.

We are in considerable doubt as to whether our Chislehurst Councillors (upon whom much depends) share all our objections and they have accordingly been invited to attend the Town's Meeting. Our members need hardly be reminded that the larger the attendance the greater weight the meeting will carry.

**The September Floods:** Many of our members suffered severely from the flooding during the abnormal rainfall on 14th–15th September. Many ground floors were flooded—some with sewage. We extend our sympathy to all and particularly to those in Lower Camden where the maximum depth of flood water reached 10 feet. On behalf of the residents in that area we express our thanks to Mr. Reg. Bacon, a local trader and President of the Chislehurst Chamber of Trade, and to Stephen and John Walter of Oakwood Lodge who, at some peril to themselves and well before the Police (who had other calls) could reach the scene, quickly provided boats for the

rescue of young and old people threatened with drowning.

Stephen and John were home from Stonyhurst College and quietly returned there after these events. In view of the criticisms so often levelled against the younger generation we think that their action over that week-end should be placed on record. Many local residents were also active in the work of rescue, among them our Committee-member, Mr. Frank Grundy, who was many times breast deep in flood water. The residents of Lower Camden are also most grateful for the yeoman service rendered by the Police, the British Red Cross and the W.R.V.S.; also to the Borough authorities for the provision of drying apparatus. The visit of the Mayor, Councillor H. W. Haden, was also much appreciated.

We have written to the Town Clerk asking for an enquiry into the flooding at Lower Camden and have been assured that all aspects of the matter will be examined. It is obvious that the conduit carrying the Kyd Brook under the railway is inadequate and lacks any sort of screen or grid to prevent its becoming blocked by debris. We are arranging for a meeting of all the residents affected so that full information may be passed on to the responsible authorities.

As a postscript to the flooding, it might be mentioned that, due to a fall of cliff at Lower Camden over a former entrance to the caves, part of a footpath on its summit, which ran from the top of the Old Hill to Camden Park Road (known as Kangaroo Walk) was completely carried away and it is no longer possible to walk between the two points.

**Registration of Common Land:** The Commons Conservators invited our representatives to a special meeting at which full agreement was reached on the boundaries to be registered at Cricket Ground Road. We understand

that they have proceeded accordingly and it is the view of your Committee that the annual walks to preserve common land there will no longer be necessary.

Your Committee is applying for registration of the verges at Royal Parade and the High Street which they claim to be common land (although not coming under the jurisdiction of the Commons Conservators).

**The Sheppey Group:** The Member of Parliament for Chislehurst, Mr. Alistair Macdonald, is a member of the Sheppey Group, an organisation formed to place before the Government the disadvantages to residents in Kent that would arise if the third London Airport were sited on the Isle of Sheppey. With the forthcoming advent of supersonic aircraft, each likely to cause noise problems fifty miles around, Chislehurst would be one of the places affected. The overcrowding on the road and rail approaches to S.E. London would be greatly increased by a large airport in that situation. Our Association is a subscriber to the Sheppey Group and we have invited Mr. Macdonald to attend the Town's Meeting to discuss this matter.

**Road Safety:** Our representatives on the Chislehurst and Orpington Road Safety Consultative Panel are Messrs. G. Easden and F. Grundy. The Panel examines and discusses accident statistics and the causes, and each member has the opportunity to raise matters concerning his district. In this connection, Summer Hill, Old Hill, Centre Common Road and Ashfield Lane have been considered. Regarding the last named, the Association is still pressing the Borough Council for a reduction in height of a wall at "Yelsen" which constitutes a traffic hazard. Residents seriously concerned about any aspect of road safety should bring the matter to the notice of the Hon. Secretary, or direct to either of our representatives.

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## CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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To the Manager, Martins Bank Ltd., High Street, Chislehurst.

Please receive..... subscriptions to the Chislehurst Residents' Association, at 2/6d. per annum. Total:.....

Names..... If new member please tick:.....

Address.....

Subscriptions may also be sent to the Hon. Treasurer: Alex Drage, "Little Heath," Heathfield, or to the Hon. Secretary: Mrs. M. S. Holt, 13 Oakleigh Park Avenue, Chislehurst, or to any member of the Committee.

**The Rates:** The Borough Council is seeking a reduction in certain services in order to prevent a large increase in the rates and this will also be a subject for discussion at the Town's Meeting.

**Playing Fields:** The Chislehurst Playing Fields Association is still pressing for the implementation of the scheme covering the Walden Open Space and adjacent land at White Horse Hill. They will open a new subscription list to cover the cost of a pavilion as soon as the plans have been prepared.

**Seat on site of Water Tower:** The Borough Council has agreed to hand over to the Association the stone shield with armorial bearings and other relics of the Water Tower and the Association will appeal, in the New Year, for the small sum necessary for the erection, by voluntary labour, of the proposed seat. The Conservators have kindly agreed to undertake the necessary preliminary work on the foundations.

**Refuse on the Commons and elsewhere:** We ask the support of our members in preventing the dumping of rubbish. If any persons are seen using a motor vehicle for this purpose, the registration number should be taken and the police notified.

**Dartford Loop:** Our representations to British Rail met with success and there is now a fifteen minute service to and from Mottingham throughout the day outside the rush hours, as compared with a 30 minute service previously.

**Town Planning:** We have continued our vigilance on planning applications which might affect the present character of Chislehurst either by excessive height or too great a

density. We were largely successful in securing the reduction in height of a wall at the entrance to The Meadow.

**Crowning of the May Queen:** Acting jointly with the Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men we continued the organisation of this annual event on the common at Prickend which was attended by the Mayoress, Mrs. Andrew Gunn, by the Member of Parliament for Chislehurst and by many hundreds of people.

**London Ambulance Service:** Our attention has recently been drawn to the case of a war disability pensioner who was required to attend Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, for a matter which took four minutes attention, but, due to delays in the ambulance service, required him to sit for over three hours in an invalid chair in great discomfort. We have asked our G.L.C. Councillor, Mrs. E. Beecher Bryant, to enquire whether this is normal practice and, if so, whether some method could be devised of informing the hospital when heavy delay is expected before a patient can be returned to his home.

**Membership:** The membership of the Association now exceeds 1,200. Members whose subscriptions are due are asked, where possible, to make payment to the nearest committee member, or to Martins Bank, High Street.

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#### COMMITTEE

Miss D. P. Bushell, J. A. Bushell, A.M.Inst.T. (Chairman), both of 48 Green Way, Chislehurst. B. G. Coffin, Rider's Way, Ashfield Lane, Chislehurst. Miss J. Cunningham, 9 Lower Camden, Chislehurst. A. L. Drage, A.F.A. (Hon. Treasurer), Little Heath, Heathfield, Chislehurst. C. M. Dunn, Hoblands Cottage, Kennal Road, Chislehurst. G. Easden, J. Easden, both of 1 Padcock Way, Holbrook Lane, Chislehurst. F. W. Grundy, 27 Lubbock Road, Chislehurst. A. L. Gunn, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. (Vice-Chairman), 9 Holbrook House, St. Paul's Cray Road, Chislehurst. N. T. D. Hocknell, Manor Place Lodge, Manor Park, Chislehurst. Mrs. M. S. Holt (Hon. Secretary), 13 Oakleigh Park Avenue, Chislehurst. Mrs. O. Jarrett, 90 Chislehurst Road, Orpington. S. W. Mack, Little Maxbys, Raggleswood, Chislehurst. F. G. Snocken, 18 Westhurst Drive, Chislehurst. E. Thompson, 1 Green Lane, Chislehurst.