

THE COCKPIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1934

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

CHAIRMAN

A. T. C. JONES

VICE-CHAIRMAN

H. BLANDFORD-BAKER

TREASURER

W. A. PAGE

SECRETARY

A. L. DRAGE,
4 Stainmore Close,
Chislehurst, Kent

No. 25

September, 1978

SONNET TO A KENTISH VILLAGE

Sharp stones, and timber yet unhewn,
Concealed the flow'ring glade;
When conqueror's swift and seeking blade,
Sang development's first tune.

Kings ruled, queens came, lords stayed,
And perhaps the bard pursued his muse;
While church and manor took their dues,
And commoners thronged the cockpit's shade.

From foreign shores in saddened flight,
Came empire's outcasts, sore afraid;
Since then both greed and war have laid,
Their claims to changes great and slight.

This place in honour so rehearsed,
Is peace, is home, is Chislehurst.

So wrote Clive Birch in Tom Bushell's *Imperial Chislehurst*.

Those of us who have known and lived in Chislehurst all our lives count ourselves fortunate indeed. The character and natural beauty of Chislehurst continues to attract many new residents. Visitors are surprised and delighted to find such a precious jewel only 11 miles from one of the largest and busiest cities of the world.

Naturally Chislehurst will change with time but it should not be sacrificed to the sometimes unfeeling and undesirable hand of 'progress'. Residents of Chislehurst have shown over many years that they care for the quality of their environment, and while seeking to improve the amenities they wish to do this with special regard to the place they have chosen as home.

The Residents' Association represents their views and has a powerful voice in protecting their interests in local affairs. Unfortunately bureaucracy can be insensitive to the needs and wishes of individuals. The Association has the strength to influence decision-making bodies, and it welcomes new members whether they are looking for help with a problem, or wishing only to give passive support. (There is an application form contained in this issue of 'The Cockpit'. Membership fees are very modest).

CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION —AGM

Village Hall—April 26th, 1978

The meeting, which was well attended, elected the following:

Chairman: A. T. C. Jones

Vice-Chairman: H. Blandford-Baker

Secretary: A. L. Drage

Treasurer: W. A. Page

Committee: H. T. G. Brown, Miss N. Comport

C. M. Dunn, J. Kinsella, A. R. Turner,

P. Young, Mrs. A. Duthie

(in addition to those already serving):

A. W. Coles, G. Payne, F. G. Snocken,

T. Turner, C. Weniger

F. W. Baker

P. A. Turner

Auditor:

Editor 'The Cockpit':

The position of Road Stewards' Liaison Officer is now vacant, and a volunteer would be welcome. A new list of Road Stewards is enclosed.

Specialist sub-committees were subsequently set up to deal with specific matters: Rates, Planning, Social events, and delegates have been or will be appointed to various outside organisations, for example: Bromley and District Consumer Group, Bromley Federation of Residents' Associations (BFRA), Conservation Advisory Committee of Bromley Borough Council, Road Safety Panel of Bromley Borough Council, Kyd Brook Flood Liaison Committee.

In the notes that comprise 'The Cockpit', space allows for only a brief summary to be given of the work done by these sub-committees, and delegates. Their recognition comes from the success they achieve.

THE WONDERS OF CHISLEHURST

April 10th and 11th

As we were looking forward to the joys of spring, Chislehurst was suddenly covered in a blanket of powdery snow, which fell on the Monday night. The trees on the Common by the frosty light of the roadside lights took on the appearance of a Christmas card scene. Perhaps unwelcome, but silent and beautiful. Probably few of the early morning travellers next day saw much beauty in the situation as they went to work, but the large snow-draped trees in Summer Hill were a sight to wonder at in the spring.

March 14th

The Development Control Committee of Bromley Borough Council met to consider the planning application for 73/87 High Street (Sainsbury supermarket). The Committee comprised 17 members; only 10 were present; four voted for the application including the Chairman, three against, with three abstentions. Of the two Chislehurst councillors present only one was entitled to vote. Objections against the application *in its present form* had already been made by the Association. We do not object to Sainsburys coming to Chislehurst, but we do object to the size, appearance and effect of the proposed development, the largest ever to be made in Chislehurst, and this in the heart of the Conservation Area. Constitutionally four votes of the Development Control Committee were sufficient to give outline consent for the development, but the manner and spirit with which it was done was another of the spring-time wonders of Chislehurst.

73/87 HIGH STREET—SAINSBURYS SUPERMARKET. The CRA has sought the individual views of its members over this development. A leading market research company had given their opinion that the results obtained were statistically significant—that is, they could be relied on to be an accurate representation of opinion. The CRA therefore put forward detailed objections to the size and nature of this development covering traffic problems, water drainage/flooding, observance of Conservation Area policy etc. A full Council meeting on April 24 upheld their Development Control Committee's decision by 35 votes to 17, in spite of the support that Councillors Parkinson, Bryant and Wykes gave to our request for the proposal to be referred back. From the public gallery CRA members noted an absence of Councillors' knowledge and understanding of the matter, and most of the CRA objections were not even discussed.

The Planning Application then went to the GLC for 'rubber stamping'. GLC Councillor Mrs. Wykes agreed to meet CRA representatives on site (April 26th) to hear at first hand our objections, especially those concerning traffic problems. (The Sainsbury's proposal included spaces for 138 cars, feeding out into Willow Grove.) The GLC subsequently gave their general clearance to LBB, with certain recommendations, concerning, for example, restrictions on parking. These recommendations do not have to be implemented by the LBB, although it is understood they will be respected. We then requested the Minister to 'call in' the application, but he did not accede to this request. The Association took the view that there was sufficient evidence of maladministration by the LBB for the matter to be referred to the Ombudsman and this was done in August; the results will be learnt later.

All the Association's work and representations to the LBB had failed on this important issue. We have no reason to believe that the Council will react any differently for smaller issues in the future. We shall therefore invite our three councillors and the Chairman of the LBB Development Control Committee to a special meeting to discuss ways and means of ensuring that public opinion is properly represented when determining Chislehurst planning applications

and that LBB undertake proper research and public participation in the future where it is appropriate.

CONSERVATION AREA. At the AGM, Councillor Reeves, representing the LBB, was urged to enlarge the Chislehurst Conservation area, in line with our Association's recommendations over many years. Councillor Reeves thought this could not be done in this part of the Borough because it would increase the Council's supervisory staff and therefore costs. However, the meeting overwhelmingly supported a proposal by Mr. Dunn that the CRA make further appeals to the Council for the enlargement of our Conservation Area.

WIDTH RESTRICTION BARRIERS. The Association believes that heavy traffic should be debarred from residential roads in Chislehurst, and agreed in principle with width restriction barriers on a trial basis. Objections had been made to certain sitings—Logs Hill and Old Hill—because the Council's traffic advisers were, in our view, clearly in conflict with reality. (Another barrier on the Chislehurst Road site had to be taken down because it was on a route served by school buses.) Now there have been fatalities at the Watts Lane restriction, we have pressed the LBB to survey and review the whole matter of width restriction barriers in Chislehurst, and their secondary effects.

LOOP ROAD/ASHFIELD LANE JUNCTION. On February 28th we made a deputation to the Minister, together with our MP, Roger Sims, requesting that 'Stop' signs be erected at this junction. No reply has yet been received so we are pursuing the matter again.

BUS TERMINAL — ADELAIDE ROAD. The Association fully backs the residents in the Adelaide Road area in seeking action by the London Transport Executive (or GLC) to alleviate their problem of road and property damage caused by buses using this area as a terminal. The frustration of the residents at the lack of action by the authorities was strongly aired by Mr. Riches at our AGM. As a result a feasibility study by LBB is now taking place to investigate other terminal sites or waiting areas (Belmont Parade, High Street, Edgebury, Heathfield Lane).

FLOODING OF THE KYD BROOK. A small local improvement scheme (GLC) for Lower Camden is now planned, but no major improvements are foreseen before 1985. We shall continue to urge for earlier flood relief to be undertaken, and, in the meantime, will object to any new building developments which would add to the Kyd Brook water drainage problem and increase the flood risks suffered by many residents along this waterway.

METROPOLITAN POLICE — REVIEW OF LOCAL POLICE STATIONS. The Metropolitan Police are seeking LBB's views on their proposals to close, or re-grade police stations in the area. It is proposed that Chislehurst Police Station will be reduced from an Inspector in Charge to a Sergeant in Charge. We shall object in principle to the thinning out of police coverage, and we have asked the LBB to take into account our views before they reply to the Metropolitan Police.

BRENCHLEY CLOSE/OLD HILL. Following CRA pressure to the LBB, the owners of this undeveloped site have now cleared it and fenced it in. Action was swift after rodent infestation was found on the site.

VILLAGE SIGN. This is scheduled for renovation by the Board of Conservators. We hope it will be re-erected as soon as possible, taking advantage of whatever local offers of help are made.

DEVELOPMENTS. Our Planning Committee continues to do sterling work in monitoring all development proposals for the area. Objections are made to those which infringe Conservation, and Green Belt policy, or which are not in the best interests of residents. Members, too, are recommended to be specially vigilant in examining the weekly planning applications shown in Chislehurst Library, and in making their views known to the LBB, or the Residents' Association, when unsuitable developments are proposed that degrade the environment and which could cause other problems.

MISCELLANEOUS PLANNING APPLICATIONS. Over 130 Planning Applications have been studied by the Planning Sub-Committee between January and August 1978. Most of these were for straightforward improvements to property and gave rise to no objection, but objections were raised in 38 cases, relating to infringements of Conservation policy, Green Belt policy, environmental standards, or flood hazards.

PERRY STREET/A20. Secondhand car dealers took over the site owned by the Department of the Environment early in June, and used it for exhibiting cars for sale. The Association drew the Council's attention to this illegal activity within hours of its origin, but eviction proceedings can take weeks or months to implement. The dealers appeared to have moved out a month later, but within a few days cars for sale were again on the site for a short period. We shall continue to press the authorities to evict any intruders.

SUMMER HILL FOOTBRIDGE. The new footbridge was opened in July. The final cost was quoted as £204,000.

TRAFFIC IRREGULARITIES. We are pleased at the effectiveness of the police traffic restrictions around the Bull's Head when Antique Fairs are held there. We have asked the police authorities to take similar measures to prevent dangerous and irresponsible parking in several parts of Chislehurst, especially at 'pub' opening times.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE VERGE—CHISLEHURST HIGH STREET. We were sorry to learn that the CHIS 77 project had had to be terminated because the financial contributions needed had not reached the required level. The Association still believes that the High Street verge should be improved, and were pleased to note that Mr. Snocken, a Committee member, had himself drawn up a modified scheme to put to the Council for comment.

BUS STOP IN WHITE HORSE HILL. The bus stop had been moved from 143 to 147 White Horse Hill as an 'experimental' measure by the London although it is now back at its original site. The CRA Transport Executive, in conjunction with the LBB, deplors the fact that this was done without consultation or notification, and has made its feelings known to the LTE and to the LBB through the BFRA (Bromley Federation of Residents' Associations).

COUNCIL LOTTERIES. The Council invited suggestions from the public for disbursing proceeds of their monthly lotteries (after the 13th lottery), estimated at £4,000 per month, towards environmental improvements. We have made four proposals for allocation of money:

1. Improvement of the High Street verge.
2. Issue of a publication about Borough Conservation Areas (previously put off by the LBB for lack of funds).
3. Enlargement of the Chislehurst Conservation Area.
4. Payment of the cost of refurbishing the Chislehurst Village sign.

BFRA—BROMLEY FEDERATION OF RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS. The CRA will be hosts to the next BFRA meeting in September. Through our delegate to the BFRA we learn that it

CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Application for Membership

From: Mr/Mrs/Ms

Address

Annual Subscription (from January 1st, 1979) 30p per member or 50p per household
(OAP) 20p per member) due annually January 1st

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR ROAD STEWARD.

- (a) is looking into Council planning procedures, with a view to getting better consultation;
- (b) supports the LBB's objections to enlarging Biggin Hill Airport;
- (c) has not so far opposed in principle the M25 link road, the routing of which is the subject of a Public Enquiry in September

OVERHANGING TREES. The Council has asked us to bring to your notice the need for cutting back shrubs, trees and hedges, where they obstruct footways or obscure sight lines for traffic. The owner or occupier of a property is responsible in law to ensure that no danger, obstruction or interference is caused by overgrowth.

CHISLEHURST MAY QUEEN—April 29th. The 1978 May Queen ceremony was held on the Common near Prickend Pond and was well attended. Miss Dawn Shefford was crowned May Queen; there was a fine display of maypole dancing by her retinue, country dancing by the Brownie Guides, and rousing music from the 25th Mitcham Scout Band. Roger Sims, our MP, and leading Councillors supported the occasion.

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION SOCIAL — May 31st. About 100 members enjoyed a pleasant evening on the lawns of Graham Chiesman House, and later inside for a buffet with wine.

COMMONS, OPEN SPACES AND FOOT-PATHS PRESERVATION SOCIETY. This Society, which has done so much good in the past, is seeking new members, and assistance in strengthening its scope of activity. We recommend it to you. The address is 166 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2. Our Association has renewed its membership of the Society.

CIVIC TRUST HERITAGE. The Heritage is making available £100,000 from the Carnegie Trust

for improvements to environmentally desirable areas and we are investigating the possibility that Heritage funds could be allocated to produce the Conservation Booklet.

BROMLEY AND DISTRICT CONSUMERS' GROUP. This group publishes a monthly newsletter and quarterly, 'Watchdog', containing much useful information. We hope to maintain close links with the group. Our members may like to know that their publications can be seen at Chislehurst Library. (Details of membership of the group are given in 'Watchdog'.)

BROMLEY COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL. In our November 1977 issue we gave full details of the CHC, which represents the interests of local people in relation to the National Health Service.

During the remainder of the year the following open meetings will be held at which the public can put questions: Tuesday, September 5th at Lennard Hospital; Monday, October 2nd at Hornbrook House, High Street, Chislehurst; Tuesday, November 7th at Old Council Hall, Beckenham; Thursday, December 4th at Lennard Hospital.

'THE COCKPIT'. We shall try to produce issues on a more frequent basis—three or four times a year—maintaining the present standard of reproduction. To meet the extra costs that this would mean, we are looking at the possibility of including advertising panels from local shops and tradesmen.

'The Cockpit' is produced to give members information about the Association's views and activities. If you would like additional information on any point you should contact your Road Steward or a Committee member. If 'The Cockpit' is not catering for your needs as you would like, then please make your wishes known to your Road Steward.