

# THE COCKPIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
FOUNDED 1934 REGISTERED WITH THE CIVIC TRUST

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

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## VIGILANCE

One of our Executive Committee, commenting recently on the many hours spent by the full committee, sub-committees, and individuals looking after the Association's interests, quoted Burke, 'All that is required for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing'. Certainly members of the Executive Committee recognise that it is only with painstaking vigilance that the Association can be in a position to act for the residents it represents.

We have a continual dialogue with all those corporate bodies, and individual groups in whom authority is vested to work for the good of the community, to achieve the normal constitutional rights of public discussion, consultation and acknowledgement of reasonable objections.

There are other groups and individuals, often not Chislehurst people, whose activities benefit few if any except themselves; property owners using premises for unauthorised purposes, irresponsible road users and transport operators, illegal car salesmen, speculative developers.

The Association will act to protect its members' interests when excesses or irregularities arise. But the onus cannot rest entirely with the Executive Committee—we need the active support of our rank and file members, we need you to write more often to the Press, to the Town Hall, to your local Councillors, or to make your views known to us through your Road Steward (or Association Secretary).

Too often those whose activities we oppose try to decry our standing by belittling our numerical support. The facts are these: the CRA has a current membership of 3,400, which includes many households, and represents the largest single body of opinion in Chislehurst, whose total population is estimated at 12,600.

There are many controversial issues where you can add your voice in support of the Committee. Examples are: the urgent need for major flood alleviation work on the Kvd Brook; the offensive bulk of the proposed High Street office block and supermarket, and the lack of concern shown by the London Transport Executive for the residents in Adelaide Road (Bus Terminal). There are others.

We expect the Association to grow in strength in 1979. Our Annual Subscription is still modest at 30p per member or 50p per household (O.A.P. 20p per member).

## THE OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE:

- (a) To uphold the name of Chislehurst as a township within the Local Government area and also as the name of a Postal District.
- (b) To maintain and improve the amenities of Chislehurst, with particular regard to its present character and natural beauty.
- (c) To take up (subject to the discretion of the Executive Committee) any problems encountered by members which arise owing to their residence in Chislehurst.
- (d) To co-operate with any other Association, Federation, Council or body with a view to achieving the objects of the Association.
- (e) To watch over all public matters which may tend to affect the local interests of members.
- (f) To ensure that the Association be neither party-political nor sectarian and that party politics do not enter into any discussion or business.
- (g) To provide such social activities as may be deemed expedient by the Executive Committee.

In the notes that follow you will see how our activities follow on from these objectives and we hope that we are serving your best interests. To be sure of this we should like to know your views on important issues. We also aim to be as fully representative of Chislehurst residents as we can, and welcome new members. If you have friends or neighbours who would like to join the Association, then please ask your Road Steward to call to see them.

## DEVELOPMENT & MISCELLANEOUS

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Many local residents, as well as our M.P., have expressed their disappointment that the Convent of Mercy in Yester Road has been sold to the Unification Church, an international religious organisation, also referred to as 'The Moon Sect' or 'Moonies'.

Oakeshotts, a pleasant and useful retail outlet in Royal Parade, has closed and plans have been put forward for these premises to re-open as an off-licence and wine bar. We will object only to the outdoor 'wine garden' following requests from nearby residents.

The Work of our Planning Sub-Committee involves many meetings, visits to sites, discussions and

correspondence with members affected by applications, in addition to routine visits to the Council's offices at Beckenham to inspect plans. All this is done before reports are made to the Executive Committee for approval, after which written representations are made to the Borough Planning Officer and others concerned when appropriate.

Out of 3,219 planning applications listed by the Council for the whole Borough in eleven months to 30th November 1978, 233 were for Chislehurst. Of that number 98 were considered important enough to warrant our close examination of the plans and drawings, and we opposed a total of 47. We also write supporting applications of merit.

### **73/87 HIGH STREET—OFFICES AND SUPERMARKET**

The problem of this development continues to give us considerable cause for concern. There appear to have been irregularities in local Council procedures which give favour to the developer, and do not sufficiently acknowledge the legitimate objections raised.

Once again we want to make it clear that we do not object to Sainsbury's 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 a Conservation Area.

The very objections we raised originally to this development have been those quoted by the Council in refusing planning permission for a supermarket block in nearby Farnborough (not a Conservation Area!). It seems that the basic truth of our objections has permeated into the official mind, although it is too late for them now to admit that the Chislehurst development is a ghastly mistake.

In September 1978 edition of 'The Cockpit', we said that our evidence of maladministration would be put to the Ombudsman. So much additional material, strengthening our case, has come to light that our submission has been delayed in order to include it. (The Ombudsman can, if our case is accepted, take action over the instances of maladministration, but the decision of the LBB Development Committee cannot be reversed).

The CRA was so concerned that the LBB were short-cutting procedures that we asked for a special meeting with our three Chislehurst Councillors, and this took place on 6th November. We gave them the fullest details of our complaints over many months, and especially in relation to the latest revised roof line.

The Councillors agreed to support our objections to the revised plans at the Council meeting on 5th December, although the original revised roof line plan was actually voted through by eight votes to two.

### **SALE OF RECREATION GROUND LAND**

The CRA was surprised to learn that the LBB had sold some Chislehurst Recreation Ground land to a local householder, and asked the Council why public land had been sold without consultation. We believe that this land should be preserved in its entirety for its present purpose, as this was the basis on which we understand the land was originally made over by local benefactors to the Council's care. We also be-

lieve that the sale of one plot of land could create a precedent if unchallenged. Correspondence is still going on with the Council over the legality of the sale. In replies received to date it has been stated that 'no public consultation was necessary' and that 'the Council will formally develop this land'.

### **BUS TERMINAL—ADELAIDE ROAD**

The CRA Committee appreciates the appalling problems that Adelaide Road area residents suffer from the bus terminus—houses cracking, air pollution, noise. Their efforts to get action from the LTE, GLC or LBB over 10 years have so far failed.

At a public meeting on 13th October with the LTE, GLC and LBB, the CRA was well represented to support conditionally the Adelaide Road Action Committee's proposal to make a lay-by for buses at Belmont Parade. The LBB's Highways Committee subsequently resolved that action be adjourned until further investigations are completed.

Such a lay-by cannot be the final answer and would not be a solution favoured by all—but it would in the short-term alleviate some of the problems.

The CRA believes that the LTE should investigate the possibility of re-siting the terminus in Edgebury or in William Barefoot Drive. We understand there may be local support for these two sites.

### **WIDTH RESTRICTION BARRIERS**

On 22nd August the LBB Highways Committee decided to review the suitability of road barriers, and to cancel the proposed barrier for Old Hill.

The CRA wrote to the Borough Engineer asking what would now be done about the proposed closure of Old Hill which had been suspended pending trial of a barrier. A decision is awaited.

The Watts Lane barrier was the subject of much discussion and activity within the Executive, by the Council, and by residents themselves.

The Council has now decided that this barrier should be removed but the CRA view is that residential roads should be kept free from heavy traffic and that some form of control is necessary for Watts Lane/Manor Park Road, possibly by placing barriers at their junctions with the A222 and A208, or nearer to Church Row.

The CRA also wrote to the LBB supporting Councillor Myatt's efforts to remove signs on the A222, and A208, which still direct traffic 'to Orpington' and 'to Bromley' through Watts Lane.

### **FLOODING OF KYD BROOK**

In its efforts to obtain and urge major (and other) flood alleviation works the Kyd Brook Flood Liaison Committee is in constant contact with the appropriate Bromley Council and GLC Departments, also with the elected representatives to these authorities, and the M.P.s concerned.

The GLC Engineering Department has now produced plans for the construction of a debris catchment grille (cost not known) in Gosshill Road. Drawings for this project have been inspected and agreed by the Flood Committee and the GLC is at present negotiating with the landowners concerned. The purpose of this grille is to stop debris in any form from blocking the outflow tunnels under the railway. Restriction of this outflow in the past has been one of the main causes of flooding in Woodlands

Road and Merewood Close where in August 1977 flood water depth was approximately 5ft. 6in.

At the present time GLC Contractors are carrying out minor improvement works to the waterway in Lower Camden, estimated cost £12,000. This is a widening and deepening scheme in a two-stage plan, working upstream. The object is to ensure greater containment of the river at times of high flow to avoid the flooding of many houses and gardens, particularly near the junction with Lubbock Road. It must be noted that these works will not prevent flooding in the event of weather conditions similar to those experienced in September 1968 and August 1977. It is the intention to complete just over half the first stage of this work in order to assess the speed and behaviour of the river into the culvert at Lubbock Road as this culvert was designed to suit local conditions prevailing in 1968. Since that time, the situation has changed due to developments within the area which have covered much natural drainage ground, created direct drainage and increased surface water discharge into the Kyd Brook valley.

The Flood Committee proposal for the construction of a Flood Storage Plain upstream on open ground is accepted by the GLC as a means of flood alleviation in this area. Financial resources previously available limited work on this scheme to a date after 1985/86 when technical staff would then be available following work on the River Brent. Continuous pressure by the Flood Committee, the CRA and the elected representatives (particularly on the GLC) has resulted in the recent announcement that it is hoped, but not yet resolved, to make a financial allocation for work on the Kyd Brook flood storage in the GLC 1979/80 budget. This is good news, but due to the amount of pre-planning and data-compilation which will have to be carried out, actual construction work is not expected to take place until after 1981/82.

Meanwhile, the extent of building development taking place, or planned will only serve to exacerbate the flooding conditions.

A Bromley Council report states that planning permission for 632 building units exists in the catchment area, for which work has already started or is due to commence. Permission given could be revoked but only by compensation that would have to be paid. These developments will greatly add to the surface water discharge into the Kyd Brook.

Where planning permission has been refused, developers are appealing to the Secretary of State (D of E) and the precedent of one decided case suggests that permission can then be given. At the present time the developers at the 'Cromlix' site on Summer Hill are appealing and have openly expressed their confidence to the Press that they will get the Secretary of State's authority to build. This is against the GLC advice that, 'any development in this area will aggravate the flooding problems in the Kyd Brook'.

The Flood Committee has referred this and other cases to the M.P. and GLC representative as most of the larger developments are within a quarter of a mile radius of the flood-prone areas of Chislehurst and Bickley.

## **BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The LBB's new development plan for Chislehurst may be available for consultation by April 1979.

We believe it is very important that our views are taken into account in the preparation of this plan, and we have arranged a meeting with the three Chislehurst Councillors to inform them of our wishes.

Our concern is for the future environmental outlook for Chislehurst, and the retention of its essential beauty and character. We will continue to press for enlargement of the Conservation Area, the sanctity of the Green Belt, the protection of trees, and alleviation of flood risks.

Here again we need the active support of our members. Pick up a pen and make your views known to us (or to your Councillor, or Council Chief Executive), and please let us have a copy of your letter.

There may be an opportunity to discuss our future wishes for Chislehurst at a Public Meeting. If so, we urge you to attend.

## **A222 'ROAD IMPROVEMENTS' AT CHISLEHURST COMMON**

The GLC had informed us that 'certain limited improvements to the existing roads network were not ruled out, subject to normal consultative procedures if feasible'.

We asked the GLC to record the CRA as an organisation to be consulted in the event of proposed changes, and we shall continue to check the situation.

It is understood that The Board of Commons Conservators has taken similar action.

## **TRAFFIC IRREGULARITIES**

The CRA is in frequent contact with the local police over complaints we receive, especially about inconsiderate and hazardous parking. The Commissioner of Police recently advised us that 'from the 1st October 1980 it will be an offence to park any vehicle wholly or partly on a verge, central reservation, or footway of a road with a speed limit of 40 m.p.h. or less'.

This legislation will undoubtedly help to improve the situation. In the meantime, we will continue to urge the police to use their existing powers to curb infringements although they do not have the manpower to do all that may be considered necessary.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

The CRA Executive is aiming to extend its specialist sub-committees to handle the growing volume of work that needs to be done. Planning, Highways, and Publicity are important areas of activity that will be strengthened. We are looking at new means of making the Association's views and actions more fully understood. Too often we see or hear ill-informed or even mischievous criticism of the CRA. Our official statements can only be published with certainty in 'The Cockpit', and we therefore hope to increase its frequency, although space will be a limiting factor.

We shall continue to invite Road Stewards to attend Executive meetings, and to encourage them to maintain contact with our members, especially on major issues.

Members' views are always welcome in return, and so are contributions for consideration for insertion in 'The Cockpit'.

### **CIVIC TRUST—EEC LORRIES**

We receive regular information from the Civic Trust about environmental matters, and generally our aims are in sympathy with theirs. However, we have recently advised the Trust that we strongly resist the introduction of larger EEC lorries (a major problem for the roads of Kent), and are unhappy to note that the Trust had given their 'reluctant acquiescence', in spite of which it is encouraging to learn that the Secretary of State has effectively blocked the proposal at this stage.

### **UN-MADE ROADS**

The Council introduced a new policy requiring a simple majority of frontagers to agree to making-up a road before it can be done. The CRA will continue its vigilance in Chislehurst in the interests of frontagers.

### **THE HARDY PERENNIAL: LOOP ROAD/ASHFIELD LANE**

Following the CRA's meeting with the Minister (February 1978) we understood that the matter was referred to the GLC, who have referred it back to the LBB, who will apparently not deal with it before March 1979.

We shall again press all concerned to act and not pass the buck. We believe 'Stop' signs in place of 'Give Way' signs would be an immediate improvement, and have advocated the change for a trial period.

Meanwhile, as officialdom ponders, the accidents continue.

### **VILLAGE SIGN**

The CRA offered to support the efforts of the Conservators to have the sign renovated (estimated cost £1,400), but we ourselves could not take on this responsibility.

Our suggestion to the LBB that the sign should qualify for a financial grant from the income from the Council lotteries has not been accepted.

As we believe Local Authorities maintain village signs throughout the country, we wrote again to the LBB asking them to make a special grant to the Conservators, especially as we are in a Conservation Area. This they declined.

### **IMPROVEMENTS TO THE VERGE— CHISLEHURST HIGH STREET**

Following the abandonment of the CHIS-77 Project, Mr. Snocken personally prepared new plans for the High Street verge, which he submitted to the LBB in the summer as proposals for discussion. These were referred by the LBB to the GLC.

### **TREES—A Road Steward's View**

In 'The Cockpit' we have often expressed our anxiety for the preservation of trees in Chislehurst and deplored their needless destruction. However, one of the Road Stewards takes a different view, at least as far as his own part of the Common is concerned. He believes that by allowing unrestricted tree growth on land formerly grazed, one important vista of Chislehurst has been lost. He compares today's mini-forest between Church Row and School Road with the open aspect shown in prints of earlier times, and regrets that it is no longer possible to en-

joy a clear view of the church or the neighbouring pubs.

We put forward this opinion, not with any endorsement, but as food for thought. What do you think?

### **FOOTPATH ON COMMON LAND**

At the request of local residents the CRA has successfully requested The Commons Conservators and the Council not to approve the laying of a metalled footpath on a stretch of Common land in Manor Park Road.

### **COUNCIL LOTTERIES**

Bromley Council invited suggestions for using the proceeds of lotteries. Replies were required too soon to refer to our full membership. The CRA replied in July, proposing:

1. Improvement of The Verge, Chislehurst High Street.
2. Production and issue of a publication acquainting the public with Conservation Areas in the Borough and their administration.
3. Enlargement of Chislehurst Conservation Area as advocated by the CRA in 1970.
4. Defraying the cost of reinstating the Chislehurst Village Sign.

On 20th November, the Council declined to include any of our suggestions for the proceeds of the first 26 weeks' lotteries but approved three projects outside the Chislehurst area.

We shall continue to press for the inclusion of some Chislehurst needs from subsequent lotteries. Any suggestions from members, please?

### **CHISLEHURST GOODS YARD ACTION COMMITTEE**

The success of this committee over many years in persuading the LBB to restrict the Amey Roadstone Corporation's activities is not regarded as complete. Total abatement is the aim, difficult but perhaps not impossible. The CRA is pledged to join in concerted representations to that end. Meanwhile activities on site are contained but the traffic generated by the depot continues to affect the residential roads in Chislehurst.

### **ROAD STEWARDS' SOCIAL**

This annual 'Thank you' to our Road Stewards was held last year at Graham Chiesman House on the 1st November 1978, and was very well attended.

### **BFRA**

The Bromley Federation of Residents' Associations with a membership of thirty plus, is a powerful voice in the discussion of problems which affect the Borough generally. It receives the views of its constituent members at meetings held in alternate months and proceeds to formulate policies based on majority decisions, always allowing strong minority views to be represented in the final analysis. In recent months four important items have been under discussion—the Marshall Report on Greater London, Planning Procedures, Biggin Hill Airport, and the M.25 Swanley/Sevenoaks Link. Each of these matters can have far-reaching effects upon the way of life in the London Borough of Bromley and the Federation is to be congratulated on the time and care it devotes to safeguarding citizens' interests.