

# THE COCKPIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1934 Membership 3,500

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.*

CHAIRMAN A. T. C. JONES

VICE-CHAIRMAN H. BLANDFORD-BAKER

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SECRETARY

EDITOR P. A. TURNER

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10 Penn Gardens, Chislehurst

No. 31

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## CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION—AGM

Our AGM was held at the Methodist Church Hall on 28th April. Among those present were Roger Sims MP, GLC Councillor Mrs. Wykes, and Mr. Gibbs, Chairman of Sundridge Residents' Association (and member of BFRA).

The Officers and Committee elected were:

**Chairman:** A. T. C. Jones  
**Vice-Chairman:** H. Blandford-Baker  
**Secretary:** Miss S. Spence  
**Treasurer:** W. A. Page  
**Committee:** H. T. G. Brown, Miss N. Comport, C. N. Dunn, Miss P. Howley, J. Kinsella, A. R. Turner, T. Turner  
(in addition to those serving):  
A. W. Coles, J. Fowler, G. Payne, P. A. Turner, C. Weniger  
**Auditor:** F. W. Baker  
**Editor 'The Cockpit'** P. A. Turner

Mr. Young, our member on the LBB's Road Safety Committee was subsequently co-opted on to the CRA Committee so that he could continue his excellent liaison work.

### Testimonial to Alex Drage

Our former Secretary, Alex Drage, was unable to be present at the AGM owing to ill-health.

Both his sons attended, and Colin accepted the Testimonial on his father's behalf. The Chairman thanked Alex for his outstanding contribution to the Association, and for his untiring work for Chislehurst and all its residents. Personal tributes were also made by Roger Sims, and Mrs. Wykes.

In reply, through his son, Colin, Alex thanked all his colleagues, friends, and local officials who had helped him to carry out his duties effectively. Typically he urged the CRA to continue its vigilance in matters of Borough development, planning, and administration, and he made a strong appeal for members to offer their active support in the work of the Association in preserving all that we value in Chislehurst. He reminded us that 'improvements in the quality of our life are not achieved merely by building something new or by destroying something old'.

### Road Stewards Needed

We have members in the following roads for whom there are no Road Stewards. If you live in these areas and can give a little time to the

Association in collecting annual subscriptions, distributing 'The Cockpit' and liaising with the Executive on matters of interest in your vicinity, then please contact Alun Jones—we'd like to hear from you now.

Barham Road	High Street
Belmont Road	Hillview Road
Berens Way	Holmdale Road
Broadheath Drive	Kevington Drive
Church Lane	Mainridge Road
Clarendon Way	Manor House
Clifford Avenue	Oakdene Avenue
Cranmore Road	Pickwick Way
Degema Road	Prince Consort Drive
Downs Avenue	Slades Drive
Edgehill Road	Sylvester Avenue
Elmstead Avenue	Victoria Road
Elmstead Glade	Walden Avenue
Elmstead Lane	Walkden Road
Foxbury Avenue	Wimbourne Avenue
Grange Drive	Woodclife Drive
Greenway	

## DEVELOPMENT IN CHISLEHURST

The CRA was founded in 1934 and now has a membership of 3,500, which includes many households, and represents the largest single body of opinion in Chislehurst, whose total population is estimated at 12,600.

The Association is a non-profit making, non-political organization with a special purpose 'to maintain and improve the amenities of Chislehurst, with particular regard to its present character and natural beauty'.

We act for members on matters of local importance and invite their active participation in the work of the Association especially those who are able to support the specialist sub-committees of the Executive.

Planning and development are matters of particular concern to us because we have, in Chislehurst, a dignity, charm and beauty that we believe is worth preserving. It is our earnest wish that 'growth' be measured by the degree of enhancement that we achieve to its natural character rather than by the speed of speculative development and increasing road traffic ('municipal vandalism' as Alex Drage called it) that those less caring may wish to inflict on us.

Our planning sub-committee, under Tony Turner, is one of our hardest working, attending Council meetings, and carefully scrutinizing all planning applications that affect us. In a small percentage of cases we raise objections to proposals which are contrary to Green Belt policy or to the Conservation Area requirements, or which create additional flood risks, or which are considered not to be in the best interests of Chislehurst.

Unfortunately it has to be said that recommendations emanating from Planning Departments do not always appear to reflect either the underlying principles of Town and Country Planning enactments or the needs of local inhabitants. In these circumstances, it is essential that Councillors are fully briefed by residents in order that the right decisions may be taken.

### CONSERVATION IN CHISLEHURST

Mr. C. Dunn, an Executive member, is our representative on the LBB's Conservation Area Advisory Committee. He gives here his views on conservation:

The purpose of the Civic Amenities Act was the preservation or enhancement of areas worthy of the designation 'Conservation Area'.

Has this worked well in Chislehurst over the decade since our Conservation Area was formed?

With little or nothing either preserved or enhanced, the answer must regrettably be 'NO'!

The Council was good enough to invite the CRA to recommend the area to be designated but did not accept its recommendation. It failed to include the area bounded by the A20, Perry Street and Foxbury because it was mostly open space and largely Green Belt. The CRA felt that additional protection on the 'belt and braces' principle should not prevent the inclusion of National Trust, Common or Green Belt land. In fact, Chislehurst Common was included and elsewhere the whole of the Scilly Isles was so designated.

Another matter for regret is that although neighbouring boroughs have distributed attractive leaflets setting out the aims and obligations of the Act for householders, Bromley Council has not yet done so (although it has stated it intends to).

For example, the Act says that property owners are not allowed to demolish their property, nor lop or fell established trees without prior permission of the Council. As a result of this delay in publicity, trees have already been lost without prosecution of the owners who have been excused on claiming ignorance of the law.

Through insufficient local support from residents, traders, and the Council, all of whom may possibly be excused because of financial restraints, the imaginative 'Chis 77', High Street Improvement Scheme, failed. With a more positive lead or support from the Council it might well have succeeded and become a splendid example of Conservation Area enhancement.

The biggest blow of all to befall our Conservation Area, however, has been that monstrously ugly commercial office block in the heart of the Area. Our overruled and misunderstood objections were not to Sainsburys on the ground floor, which we welcomed, but to the massive and effusive building and the traffic problems it will inevitably generate. It is worth noting that as can and does happen with

our Chislehurst applications under current planning procedures, this very important one was approved by Councillors not one of whom resided in Chislehurst.

The work of the Conservation Advisory Committee, on which the CRA has a representative, consists of vetting applications for new properties or the conversion of existing ones. These and such things as applications for illuminated commercial signs have occupied most of the Committee's time.

Dare we hope that if and when better times return, we shall see a more positive stance taken with actual enhancement as well as preservation flourishing in an enlarged Chislehurst Conservation Area.

### OFFICE BLOCK—73/87 HIGH STREET

In the last issue of 'The Cockpit' we reported an irregularity in Council procedure which had resulted in a variation in the agreed roof-line of the building being 'authorised' without the permission of the Development Control Committee. In their reply to the CRA, the LBB expressed their regret that proper procedure was not followed and have given instructions to ensure that such irregularities do not recur.

The roof-line we now see is not that originally approved, and certainly cannot be said 'to enhance the quality of the area', and this introduction to the street scene does nothing 'to avoid the suburban look'.

### LISTED BUILDINGS

Many buildings in Chislehurst are protected against alterations or demolition by being 'listed', or because they are in the designated Conservation Area.

Among the listed buildings are:  
'Easdens' in Bull Lane  
Camden Place, formerly the home of Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie  
The Cedars, facing the Cricket Ground, designed for William Willett by Ernest Newton  
St. Mary's Catholic Church, Hawkwood Lane, the private chapel of Napoleon III  
Foxbury, in Kennal Road  
Rose Cottage in Perry Street, 18th century  
Frogpool Manor Farm, from 17th century  
The Bull's Head Hotel  
Abury Cottage, Royal Parade  
St. Nicholas Church, medieval  
Church of the Annunciation, High Street

### THE CEDARS

In spite of the fact that the second planning application for a Hospital, albeit called a Nursing Home, was recommended for approval by the LBB Planning Department, the Development Control Committee very firmly rejected the proposal.

The CRA had opposed both applications on the grounds that they were contrary to the designated zoning plan, not in accord with the intention of Conservation Area policy, contributed additional flood risk, would add to local traffic problems at a difficult junction, and mean loss of trees.

Any proposals for development at the rear of this beautiful old listed building (built 1893) must be most carefully assessed lest the setting of The Cedars be seriously and irreparably damaged.

## **CROMLIX ENQUIRY**

The D of E have allowed the Wates Ltd appeal on a legal technicality, which means that Wates are now able to proceed with the development of the site on which they plan to build 22 houses. As the law now stands, the Council, once having given outline permission for the development, could not then defer detailed permission on a question of drainage (to reduce flood risk along the Kydbrook) which had not been referred to at the outline stage.

The Inquiry Inspector, in his report, made these comments:

'The risk of flooding in the catchment of the Kydbrook is so severe and its occurrence does such great harm to its victims and their properties, that it would be wholly wrong to permit the development of the site until adequate precautions have been taken to remove the additional risk that it would create.'

The CRA, and the Kydbrook Liaison Committee, also believe that, unless on-site precautions are taken to alleviate the water being drained directly into the Kydbrook from the site, the Cromlix development will add yet another flood risk to properties along the valley.

## **A20/A222 PUBLIC INQUIRY**

The CRA was represented at the Public Enquiry in May by one of its Executive, Mr. A. W. Coles.

Our submission did not disapprove in principle the improvement of the A20 but objected to certain aspects of the scheme which would directly or indirectly have adverse effects upon specific parts of Chislehurst, on the community in general, and on residents of other parts of Bromley Borough.

In this respect the CRA holds different views from our GLC Councillor and our local authority.

The CRA submission was made under two headings—Local and General.

Under Local, we question the need for a roundabout at the A20/A222 (Perry Street) Junction with its attendant Compulsory Purchase Orders and local disturbances. We believe a better solution would have been a simple bridge at this junction.

Traffic on the A222 will increase above the level of natural growth, and the A222 will also attract additional traffic now using alternative routes from Petts Wood and Orpington.

The GLC have already given their undertaking that Common land in Chislehurst will not be taken for widening the A222.

The traffic flow will grow beyond the designed capacity of the A222, causing Perry Street to operate above saturation, and increase accidents.

The proposal that the Beaverwood Club should have its future access via Beaverwood Road would only aggravate the problem of traffic flow and accident potential in the immediate vicinity of Beaverwood School.

In General, we believe that the economic advantages claimed are non-existent and cannot be used in justification until the traffic delays, which occur on the A20 nearer London, are solved. 'A motorway is the shortest distance between two traffic jams'.

The CRA asked for accident estimates to be made for the A222, as this had not been done.

We disputed the economic viability which had been based only on capital cost and savings (accident plus time saving). CRA estimates showed an

unacceptable negative return for the scheme, and this without considering the Net Energy (Resource) costings.

The result of the Inquiry will be made known later.

## **LOCAL TRAFFIC PROBLEMS**

Our Chairman represented the CRA in May at a meeting called by Roger Sims, MP to discuss traffic problems on the Commons. Among matters covered were a one-way system for the centre of Chislehurst and the Commons immediately adjacent, the War Memorial Junction, Loop Road/Ashfield Road Junction (8 reported injuries through accidents and in the first quarter of this year). Mr. L. Jones, Chairman of Chislehurst and St. Paul's Cray Commons Conservators, took note of opinions expressed and will subsequently be consulting with interested parties.

It is understood that the GLC have no plans to 'improve metropolitan roads in Chislehurst within the next five years'.

On our own behalf we are still pressing the authorities for action in reducing the hazards and inconvenience caused by inconsiderate parking in the vicinity of local public houses, (the area around Cricket Ground Road is now especially bad), and in Elmstead Lane near the Station. Unfortunately there appear to be no easy solutions to these problems.

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

Last year the CRA queried the LBB's right to sell part of the Recreation Ground to private ownership. We believed this to be contrary to the intentions of those who secured this land for the people of Chislehurst.

In May this year, the LBB announced that they would consider the sale of a further piece of the Recreation Ground land to a local householder. The CRA believes that disposal of this land must not continue and will actively oppose its sale.

## **BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Chislehurst is 6th on a list of 17 areas for which reports and proposals will be published by the LBB.

The Chislehurst plan has not yet been published but the CRA (and BFRA) will act on behalf of members' interest when the proposals become known.

## **TREE PRESERVATION**

One of our prime concerns is that of tree preservation and such is the importance we place on this activity that we have formed a new sub-committee for TREES. Col. Weniger will take charge of this group, and a report of its work will be made in future editions of 'The Cockpit'.

## **HEALTH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Public meetings of Bromley Community Health Council for the following months will take place in The Lecture Room, School of Midwifery, Masons Hill, Bromley, starting at 7.30 p.m.: 3rd September, 14th October, 13th November, 15th December.

## **BONFIRES**

Complaints continue to reach us from members who suffer from neighbours' bonfire smoke. Surprisingly we can find no byelaws that give protection to the sufferer. We therefore suggest that if bonfires are a persistent problem, you advise the Environmental Health Officer.

## **CRA SOCIAL—9th SEPTEMBER**

We invite all members to our next Cheese and Wine Social in Graham Chiesman House, at 8.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 9th September.

The Socials are informal and give new and old members the opportunity to meet, and to exchange views on matters of local interest.

Come and enjoy a pleasant evening—tickets will be available shortly from Road Stewards.

## **THE KYDBROOK FLOOD LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Mr. A. R. Turner of Lubbock Road is on the CRA Executive and is Chairman of the Kydbrook Flood Liaison Committee. He reports here on some disturbing trends.

The Kydbrook Flood Liaison Committee's objective is to achieve a major flood prevention scheme for the area it covers.

A major part of this work is concerned with matters related to proposed building developments which will increase the flooding risk either by increasing the run-off or direct drainage into the Kydbrook—this task is continuous.

There is, however, a physical aspect of the Flood Committee work—the vital matter of keeping a close watch on the course of the Kydbrook waterway from the Darrick Wood area of Farnborough, to Sundridge Golf Course, Bromley. This work is to ensure that the waterway is cleared of obstructions and to check that efficient river maintenance is being carried out.

### **Inspection of Culverts**

This involves the inspection of the open waterway and the culverts under roads, railway embankments and other properties. The inspection of culverts is both arduous and hazardous particularly in the older culverts beneath the railway which have approximately four feet head-room with very slippery and mostly broken or worn floor levels. This is due to the continuous flow of water since they were built 119-years ago. These culverts also show other signs of age and settlement, being constructed entirely of bricks.

### **Silt Build-up**

Within the culverts, there are also quantities of silt of varying depths. The condition of the culverts and the silt deposits have long been the subject of much correspondence and many meetings with the GLC who are responsible for the maintenance of the Kydbrook. Whilst some repair work has been carried out and more such work is to follow, the deposits of silt remain in the culverts. We have been given to understand that due to the dangers involved, GLC Maintenance crews are not allowed to work in these culverts.

Since our representations following the floods of August 1977, there has been a marked improvement in the maintenance of the open watercourse but the Flood Committee view is that the standard of maintenance should be very much higher especially to remove silt deposits.

We are informed that the Kydbrook receives a much higher standard of maintenance than other flood-prone districts within the Greater London County. The standard of maintenance in other flood areas is, therefore, a matter for conjecture!

The subject of river maintenance has also been taken up by Bickley Ward Councillor Mrs. D. Moir,

who has taken a lively interest in flooding matters, and asked to be taken on a through-culvert inspection. Having spent 2½ hours on the inspection, she said: 'I was amazed to discover the condition of the culverts some of which are very old indeed'. Mrs. Moir has also taken up this matter with the Bromley Council and the GLC—the battle continues.

### **Other Debris**

Apart from silt accumulation, following even a moderate rain-fall there is always a large amount of tree wood and natural debris which gets trapped by the catchment grilles in Gosshill and Lubbock Roads. These catchment grilles have undoubtedly stopped the larger type of debris from entering the culverts. However, before the removal of this debris, we have noted that debris of another type is also present, that of a domestic kind including garden refuse. Likewise, at various points along the Kydbrook metal debris such as vehicle silencers, exhaust pipes and other parts are often found, as well as large patches of oil and detergent.

This type of debris and refuse not only contributes to flooding situations but in the event of flooding, it is refuse of this kind which is washed into houses and gardens—added to which is the general filth from house and road drains and some foul sewers.

### **Increase of Rubbish Dumping**

Dumping is an environmental matter which also creates pollution, health problems and an increase in rodent activity and breeding; unfortunately the incidence of dumping in the area is increasing. Recently the Flood Committee raised this matter with Councillor Myatt and the Bromley Council departments concerned in respect of Gosshill Road where rubbish dumping had become widespread, some of which we personally had to remove from the Kydbrook. The possibility of flooding due to dumped rubbish particularly plastic material is very much increased. Likewise, in the event of flooding, rubbish dumped near a river will become awash, contributing to a possible health hazard over a wider area. We are, however, able to report that a clearance of some of this refuse has been undertaken.

Another incidence of rubbish dumping is that on the site of Old Hill Court where the building of 16-flats is to commence in the near future. The extent of rubbish dumped on this site has increased so much that the immediate residents sent a petition to Bromley Council asking for its removal. The Council have confirmed that the Environment Health Department has issued a Public Health Notice on the site owners to be followed by formal proceedings for clearance of the rubbish.

This work of the Flood Committee continues as does its vigilance in noting blocked drains and other factors which increase the risk of flooding.

### **SAD LOSS OF ALEX DRAGE**

It is with great regret that we heard of the death of Alex Drage, as this issue of 'The Cockpit' was going to press.

Alex was a truly splendid character, who fought with such vigour for the interests of Chislehurst.

We shall remember him with affection.