

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.

No. 39

March 1983

AGM - APRIL 19

(Note change of date)

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting will be held in THE METHODIST CHURCH HALL, PRINCE IMPERIAL ROAD, on Tuesday, 19th April 1983, at 8.15 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
2. Matters arising
3. Committee Report for 1982*
4. Accounts for 1982
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Committee
7. Appointment of Auditor
8. Any other business

*Will members please note that Item 3, Committee Report for 1982, will have been covered in regular issues of 'The Cockpit'. This will avoid the need to give a long verbal report at the AGM. Questions may be asked arising from these issues.

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

The requests for guidance and support continue to grow rapidly in number, so-much-so that on one day in the past year I received twenty telephone calls within the space of eight hours. This is most encouraging, for it shows the widespread confidence that members, and non-members, have in our supportive attitude.

Also rewarding has been the response to our invitation to join the Association, which accompanied our leaflets on 'Trees in Chislehurst' and 'Tree Care'. This exercise, which covered the whole of Chislehurst, brought in an additional two hundred new members, an indication of the concern felt by so many residents about our tree heritage. The Association is indebted to Charles Weniger, our Vice-Chairman, for having organised the distribution, and to Nicolette Comport, and Tony Turner of The Meadow, for having assisted Charles in the delivery from door to door. Our thanks also to the Road Stewards who participated.

CONSERVATION AREA — BICKLEY

Speaking of trees reminds me that word has reached us of the LBB's Development Control Committee's decision to instruct the Officers of the Planning Department to look into the possibility of making the Bickley side of the Kyd Brook Valley into a Conservation Area.

The CRA fully supports the extension of the Chislehurst Conservation Area into the Bickley Ward in order to preserve this attractive wooded landscape.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

It will be very helpful if nominations for the above are sent to the Chairman (at 10 Thistlemead) a week or so in advance of the AGM. The Constitution does not lay this down, but embarrassment is caused at the meeting when members who are present are nominated and their consent has not been obtained. Nominations must carry names of proposer and seconder and the assent and signature of the person nominated.

MEMBERSHIP FOR 1983

We are pleased to have your membership in 1983 and it is my wish to see as many of you as possible at our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 19th April.

Our Road Stewards have been busy collecting 1983 subscriptions and issuing our new Membership Cards. If you do not already have a card for 1983 would you please contact your Road Steward, or our Chairman.

Subscriptions remain at 60p per member, or £1 per household per year. OAPs are 40p per member or household per year.

Reports of our major activities are published in 'The Cockpit', which all members receive regularly during the year. The Association also helps members with personal matters relating to planning or development problems, unwanted nuisance (noise, road hazards, flooding, etc.) and advises on action that can be taken to preserve our lovely neighbourhood.

We rely on your active support and will always welcome help and advice from the many trades and professions represented by our members.

Chairman:
A. T. C. JONES
(01-467 2796)

Vice-Chairman:
Lt. Col. C. B. WENIGER

Editor:
P. A. TURNER

ROAD STEWARDS

In the March issue of last year we listed a number of roads not covered by Road Stewards and appealed for volunteers. We are happy to report a good response to our appeal, and we thank the following members for offering their services:

Mr. D. Baker, 42 Elmstead Lane
Miss C. Bonye, Dees Holt, Raggleswood
Mr. N. K. Burne, 73 Holmdale
Mr. E. W. Burton, 15 Prince Consort Drive
Miss S. Dobner, 6 Albany Road
Mrs. Green, Torphin, Wilderness Road
Mr. L. Holt, 13 Oakleigh Park Avenue
Mr. H. Kingsbury, Lyridon, The Drive
Mrs. N. D. Lawrence, 10 Greenway
Miss L. Phillips, 7 Hill Close
Mrs. D. J. C. Carr, The Orchard, Knowle Lodge,
Walden Road
Mr. M. Hammond, 71 Belmont Lane
Mr. B. Lawler, 22 Belmont Lane
Mrs. Waldron, 15 Downs Avenue
Mr. B. A. Hope, 5 Walkden Road

In recent months we have lost the services of Mrs. J. Meisenkothen of Walnut Tree Close. We thank her for her past services, and wish her and her husband good luck in their new home in London.

To all our Road Stewards we extend our warmest thanks for their loyal support and hard work, which ensure the continued success of the Association.

FRIENDS OF CHISLEHURST COMMONS

An appeal by the Conservators

Accompanying each copy of 'The Cockpit' will be an appeal leaflet by the Board of Conservators. The CRA Committee is pleased to support this appeal and very much hopes that as many as can afford will covenant to support a most worthy cause. A generous response could, for example, enable the Board to employ casual labour to keep the Commons free of litter, which is a growing problem as we know from the number of complaints received.

Residents of Chislehurst will have the opportunity of attending a public meeting arranged by the Board of Conservators on 27th April, at 8.00 p.m., at the Village Hall, when reports will be given and opportunities for questions provided.

HILL CLOSE

It is hoped that by the time this issue is in the hands of members the froth and bubble fermented by recent publicity will have died down.

Lack of foresight at development planning stage for the needs of residents in this area contributed to the creation of a most unfortunate situation.

Your Chairman, in an attempt to air a balanced view of the problem, wrote to the Chislehurst Times in February. Unfortunately this letter was not printed in full and certain important facts were omitted.

We hope to have a meeting with the editor of the Chislehurst Times to discuss the issue of accurate reporting and coverage of CRA views in the future.

SCADBURY

300 acres of Green Belt purchased by the LBB

Members will be delighted that this section of the Green Belt has been purchased by the LBB, who, we trust, will act responsibly regarding its future. There were many who showed concern when this part of the old Manor was put up for sale, and we received numerous enquiries, and requests, to have a voice when future plans for Scadbury are formulated.

We therefore asked the LBB if the CRA could be represented on its panel of members looking into possible uses for land around Scadbury. This request was refused, but we are pressing to be represented and join Councillors Mrs. Bryant and Reeves who sit on the panel.

In the meantime we have made our views known to the LBB. We want to see this area returned to productive farmland (a view shared by the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries) with the woodlands retained as a residential amenity. We oppose any sale of land for development, or any development which would be to the detriment of the area and contrary to the wishes of residents who could be affected.

GOSSHILL ROAD

New proposals

At last there are signs that the solution to the fly-tipping problem is in sight. We have received from the LBB an attractive drawing of what could be done to improve the aspect of this road, at the same time preventing the incursion of the Philistines who have made part of it look like a refuse dump. The drawing and costing list have been passed to the residents in the road, most of whom have already expressed to us their approval of the proposed scheme. The new proposal will not involve the removal of cars parked at the Summer Hill end, so nearby residents need not worry about additional parking in their roads.

BULL LANE

and The Shaw

There have been suggestions made recently that both these roads should become 'one-way' only. The CRA has informed the LBB that it would like to be consulted if these ideas become firm proposals. We also believe that such decisions cannot be taken in isolation but have to be evaluated with regard to the whole pattern of road usage in the area.

BELMONT PARADE bus terminus

As we go to press the LBB informs us that a meeting with Selkent representatives is due shortly to ascertain what steps Selkent is taking to reduce the number of vehicles parking at this spot. We hope that the promise to combine services to obviate intensive use of Belmont Parade will bring speedy relief to residents in the immediate vicinity.

ELMSTEAD LANE

The application for change of use from residential to car sales at 39 Elmstead Lane, having been refused by the LBB, the unauthorised practice of using the premises for car sales continued at the time of writing. Representations have been made to the Planning Department who have informed us that the matter is now in the hands of the Legal Department. It is not widely known that the process of enforcement is a complicated one. The LBB's solicitor has to ensure that the order is served on the true owners of the property concerned otherwise the process is set back a year. This is galling to neighbours, but the workings of English law are often intricate.

We still await the imposition of restrictions on parking in Elmstead Lane. These will be of considerable benefit to local residents who have suffered loss of amenity by inconsiderate parking in recent years.

SUNNYMEAD

At the time of publication of this issue the date for consideration of this application by the LBB had been postponed.

We thank all those who have written stating their objections to the totally undesirable development proposed for this site.

COOKHAM DENE

Residents reject development proposals

Three alternative applications have been submitted by Ferndale Homes to the Planning Department of the LBB. At a meeting held on 9th February at the Village Hall, Mr. John Sprawson of Manor Park gave details of the plans on display to a well-attended meeting of local residents. Following a thorough exchange of views, the meeting, with one abstention, decided to oppose all three applications and to submit its own application for low-density development at the front of the site only. The application would be for four houses leaving the Meadow untouched.

We are grateful to Mrs. J. Miles and Messrs. J. Linch, J. Sprawson, N. Tilley and T. Turner for the time they have devoted to monitoring proposals for this development over the past months.

FALKLANDS MEMORIAL

Plans for an engraved stone

Our oak tree has been planted near the War Memorial corner. We plan to place an engraved granite memorial stone by the tree later this year. Specialists advise that the cost is likely to be £150, and we are hoping that members will contribute towards this cost.

Donations now please to 'CRA/Falklands Memorial', c/o Mr. A. T. C. Jones, 10 Thistlemead. Thank you.

BETTER FLOOD CONTROL

A report by A. R. Turner
Chairman, Chislehurst Area
Kyd Brook Flood Liaison Committee

Continued rivercourse inspections and representations by the Kyd Brook Flood Liaison Committee have resulted in upgraded GLC maintenance for both routine and emergency situations. This service prevented localised flooding events which otherwise would undoubtedly have occurred during the heavy rain periods of last summer and autumn. GLC technical staff are also now more closely involved in maintenance operations.

Nevertheless, major flood alleviation measures and the detailed design and planning work involved, are not proceeding at the rate hoped for following the flooding event of August 1977. This is due to a GLC policy decision taken in October 1979 to concentrate all available resources in terms of technical and engineering staff on capital works for the River Brent scheme in West London. This work is not expected to lead to completion until 1987 — and even then may be further extended.

However, it is understood that following the completion at an earlier date of some River Thames contracts, more GLC staff might then be available.

It is also acknowledged by the GLC that the minor works and river improvements carried out to date for the Kyd Brook are of limited benefit and the only long-term solutions to the flooding problems of these areas are major capital works.

Meanwhile, we are assured that proposals and options put forward by the Kyd Brook Flood Liaison Committee are included in current GLC investigations for major alleviation works for which surveying is now in progress along the Kyd Brook.

As part of a Liaison Committee covering the course of the Kyd Brook, we are also closely involved with our neighbouring areas, as the danger of flooding in Chislehurst is exacerbated by both local building developments and those of the other districts of the Kyd Brook. Provision to help overcome this problem was made 22 years ago by the formulation of the River Ravensbourne (including Kyd Brook) Improvement and Flood Prevention Act, 1961, under the terms of which we continue to make representations for major flood alleviation works.

WAR MEMORIAL

The problem of litter

We thank the LBB for having commissioned the cleaning of the stonework and relettering of names. This will have given great satisfaction to many of our community.

If only the area surrounding the War Memorial matched its fresh appearance it would give pleasure to us all. Despite the appeal made by local heads of schools to their pupils and despite our appeals in 'The Cockpit', the litter problem continues unabated. The same applies to the area around the lower pond. (There is a way you can help the Conservators — see the item 'Friends of Chislehurst Common').

SPRING CLEANING TREASURE HUNT

R. Hopper, Chislehurst Library
explains how you can make a valuable contribution to
our local history records.

What treasures lurk in your loft? Clutter your cupboards? Gather in your garage? 'Not many', you may well reply. 'Nothing except a boxful of granny's old photographs, a postcard album and some ancient accounts ledgers in funny handwriting dating back to the year dot . . . who'd call **that** treasure? Mind you, the photos and postcards are of Chislehurst, so they are of some interest; I don't think I'll get rid of them just yet . . .' So they continue to sit in your sideboard or choke your chest of drawers, because you cannot bear to throw them away, and they may never see the light of day again.

However, there is an alternative place for them, where they will not be in your way, yet can be seen by you and any other interested people; where they will be looked after by experts, and kept in ideal storage conditions, and will still be serving a useful purpose. They can become part of the endless, fascinating, and never complete jigsaw of local history, a puzzle in which we can all participate, and to which we can contribute some of the pieces.

How can this be done? The first place to take these treasures is to your local library at Chislehurst, where they will be accepted as donations to local history archives and passed on to the Local Studies department at Bromley Central Library. Although the library cannot pay you for these items, you can derive much satisfaction from knowing that what you have given to your library could be of permanent value to all students and lovers of Chislehurst for long after your lifetime.

Any printed or handwritten material, relating to Chislehurst past and present, will be welcome. Apart from the items already mentioned, things such as posters or advertisements for local events, whether in 1860 or 1980, and the entry tickets for them; sale catalogues and estate agents leaflets relating to old houses particularly; diaries, letters, minutes of local clubs and societies; paintings, sketches, maps, local guides; a headed receipt from a shop now gone from the High Street, a scrapbook of local bits and pieces, or the programme of a concert in the Village Hall, could all be of value as contributions to the raw material of local history. Objects such as might be awarded as prizes at local fetes or shows, commemorative mugs and spoons, would also be welcome. These would go to the Museum at Orpington Library, but otherwise items would go to the Local Studies department, where if necessary, expert care and attention could be given to old or fragile material, and it could be properly stored.

Because it is important that the Local Studies department should be free to decide how materials may best be utilised, and where they should be housed, all items will be treated as donations and acknowledged as such. In certain circumstances it may be wished to make an item available as a permanent loan rather than as a donation. This should be made clear at the time the item is handed over. It would be best to discuss the terms of the loan with the Archivist, Local Studies Librarian or Museum Curator. In the case of personal family items such as letters or diaries, it may be wished that these should not be made available for study until a certain time has elapsed; such matters may be discussed in

confidence with the Archivist, who will also be pleased to advise on any item of doubtful historical value. It should be noted that books and other printed materials can only be accepted as donations, not loans.

At Chislehurst library there is only a small collection of items such as are being asked for. It is generally found that the majority of enquiries can be answered from the published or duplicated histories in stock, or by referring to the local history index which points enquirers in the right direction. There is little storage space for more ephemeral items. When donations have been sorted out centrally, some duplicated items may well come back to Chislehurst or copies may be supplied for local use. Access to locally held items is quite straightforward, and relates to opening hours. If it is desired to consult archive material held at the Local Studies library, some prior notice is much appreciated, for it can take some time to locate items in a large collection. All initial enquiries may be made at Chislehurst.

'And what about the old accounts ledgers?' you ask. May we leave you with the thought that much of our knowledge of the Blackney Forge in Chislehurst was obtained from such a ledger, that Mr. Tom Bushell rescued from a bonfire . . . Before you consign your spring cleaning rubbish to the flames or the dustbin, ask yourself: 'would they like to see this at the library?' Bring it along and ask, and even if you still think it is rubbish, show it to us anyway — we also have a dustbin!

LEISURE FACILITIES

The Chislehurst Leisure Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. L. B. Cross, continues to meet at regular intervals. The Recreation Committee of the LBB has instructed the Director of Recreation to examine various ideas for the provision of additional playing fields. Some progress has been made in that the use of Edgebury Primary School playing field is available for football practice for the younger teams on Saturday mornings. We are grateful to the Education Department for this gesture. Shortly, representatives of the Leisure Committee will meet Members and Officers of the Recreation Committee.

MAY QUEEN

This year's ceremony will be held on Saturday, 7th May at the traditional place on the Common. Entrants for the children's fancy dress competition should report to Red Hill School at 1.45 p.m. to arrive at the Common by 3.00 p.m. There are vacancies for the May Queen's retinue in 1984. Applicants must be five years old at the time of joining. Please write to Mrs. J. Peacock, Secretary, Chislehurst May Queen Society, 5 Alexander Road, Chislehurst.

The Society is very much dependent upon the generosity of the public. Those wishing to make donations should contact either the Secretary or the Treasurer, Mr. R. Newport Gwilt, 49 High Street, Chislehurst.

The committee is indebted to so many traders who gave such excellent prizes for the May Queen stall at last year's Chamber of Commerce Fair.