

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. 46

April 1986

AGM — APRIL 29

As previously announced our Annual General Meeting will be held in the Methodist Church Hall, Prince Imperial Road, Chislehurst, on Tuesday, 29th April 1986 at 8.15 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
2. Matters arising
3. Committee Report for 1985*
4. Accounts for 1985
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 1985, 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

Once again we have to thank our members for proving that the democratic process still works, providing that sufficient citizens are ready to make known their views to the Authorities in a well-reasoned and determined manner. The proposals for imposing parking fees at all Chislehurst public car parks and at the verges in the High Street brought forth an excellent response in personal letters and petition signatures from so many residents, with the result that the Technical Services Committee of the LBB, in its wisdom, accepted the advice of its Chairman, Councillor Crask, who had appreciated the force of our arguments, and graciously withdrew the proposals. Echoes of 1983, when the magnificent response of our members contributed to the withdrawal of the Government's Draft Circular on the Green Belt.

The CRA Committee thanks members, non-members and the Chamber of Commerce for the support they gave following the distribution of our circular letter,

which was so ably drawn up by our Secretary. Again, we have to thank our faithful Road Stewards for delivering the circular letters so promptly in unpleasant weather.

RECENT SUCCESSES

Recent years have produced a succession of important issues involving our community — enlargement of the Conservation Area, the proposed sale of Scadbury, the Draft Circular on Green Belt and now the 'Pay and Display' proposals — and in each case we have succeeded in our campaigns, thanks to the support we receive from Association members. There are, however, a fair number of residents of Chislehurst who are not members of the Association and who are content to leave protection of our local interests to the 'faithful'. We ask the latter to remind their neighbours, who are not members, of our efforts and to convince them that the future well-being of Chislehurst is most likely to be safeguarded when ALL residents are members of the CRA.

REPORT ON THE PAST YEAR

Turning to the task of keeping the membership informed of the latest developments with regards to some of the other issues with which we have been concerned over the past year, we are able to report progress on some matters.

Goshill Road

At long last the work of clearing the rubbish and of erecting barriers to prevent the incursions of fly-tippers has been started. It is also intended to landscape the area where the dumping has occurred.

Leisure Facilities

Despite the abandonment of the scheme proposed for the Walden Recreation Ground, a glimmer of hope remains for those public-minded people who give their time organising and coaching local sports teams.

The GLC has been seeking to lease County Gate Playing Field to a club. At the time of writing it appears that nothing has been resolved. In April, the land — with or without a lease — will transfer to Bromley. It has been recommended that the LBB Director of Recreation be authorised to investigate the leasing

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proposals for County Gate Playing Field to ensure the optimum use of the site.

At the time of preparing this issue of 'The Cockpit' Councillor Reeves was discussing with the Chairman of the Recreation Committee the possibility of helping to accommodate the needs of the local sports clubs. The CRA has played its part by contacting the Recreation Department when this item first appeared in the minutes of the Recreation Committee.

Traffic in the High Street area

With the approaching demise of the GLC, the LBB's Chief Engineer and his staff are working on the provision of traffic lights at the junctions of Willow Grove and Park Road with the High Street.

Approval has also been given to convert the existing crossing in the High Street to a Pelican crossing.

White Horse Hill

A scheme for landscaping in White Horse Hill, drawn up by Ian Goldsmith, one of our younger members, has been submitted by the CRA to the Council for consideration. It has our support and we look forward to receiving favourable comments from the Planning Department.

The siting of the pedestrian refuge is still a controversial subject and needs to be given urgent attention.

The matter which gives rise to considerable concern among our members in Walkden Road and Hillview Road is the steady erosion of their amenity around the junction of Hillview Road with White Horse Hill. Certain activities which have occurred in connection with the car spares shop have not helped. Our Road Steward in Walkden Road, Mr. B. Hope, has kept us informed of developments and he and many of our members were able to give vent to their exasperation when Councillors and LBB Officers visited the spot during the 'Walkabout'. Local complaints have been noted and action has been promised.

The Post Office

Following growing complaints last year about the quality of service in the High Street Post Office we wrote to the Head Postmaster of Bromley and to our M.P., Mr. Roger Sims, who supported us in pressing for more counter staff. The Head Postmaster in his reply stated that there was a shortage of trained staff, that it took some months to train new staff, but he hoped that by the end of the year the situation would see an improvement. The CRA suggested that the Post Office should consider employing retired counter staff on a supply basis so that they could man the counter at peak periods, e.g. pension payments. The system is employed in the world of education and some retired teachers find it useful to supplement their pension. We are sure that some retired postal clerical staff would welcome a similar opportunity.

We also suggested a single queueing system in fairness to all concerned. This appears to be working quite well.

Parking of untaxed cars in the High Street

We have steadily pursued this matter with the local police, who have taken some action, but the problem still remains. However, if the fresh attempts to landscape the verges comes to fruition, we shall press for short period parking at the spaces set aside for shoppers.

Outstanding Problems

There are some problems yet to be resolved. Rest assured, we shall beaver away until the solutions are found. Chief of these problems, and one which is

constantly referred to the CRA is that of Parking. Elmstead Lane and Old Hill/Chislehurst Road are two of the black spots which must be given urgent attention.

Traffic through residential areas is a problem that almost rivals that of parking. Residents in Old Hill and the Marlings Park Area suffer in this respect. We are aware that the Chief Engineer's staff are studying these situations. It is hoped that solutions can be found in the very near future.

EXCELLENT SUPPORT

In concluding this review the vital contributions of our Sub-Committees, of our delegates to various bodies and of our Road Stewards must again be emphasised. The Executive Committee relies very much on the Sub-Committees and the Delegates to feed in important matters which affect the area as a whole. If any of these matters threaten an adverse effect upon the community then the work of the Road Stewards in alerting the general membership is indispensable. We are fortunate in having the input and the output so efficiently executed. I am sure that all members will join with me in thanking all members of the Executive Committee and all Road Stewards most warmly for their constant vigilance and diligent application to their respective duties. The most emphatic way of showing your thanks is by attending the AGM in large numbers. We look forward to seeing a full house.

MEMBERS' SOCIAL

20th June

Members are reminded that the Social Evening will be held at Graham Chiesman House on Friday, 20th June, 8.00 p.m.-10.00 p.m. The price of tickets has yet to be determined, but will be around £5.00. Those wishing to attend should let the Chairman know quickly so that tickets can be reserved. We are restricted to one hundred guests. Early application is advised.

CHIS 77 - THE REBIRTH

High Street face-lift

So many of our members will be pleased to learn that the CRA Executive Committee is considering reviving the plans for improving the High Street. The idea has been given impetus by the statement recently made by the Leader of the Council, that he wishes to see six of the High Streets in the Borough being given a face-lift in order to make the street scenes more attractive. Our own High Street is included.

We are assured of Council support and money has already been set aside for the purpose. Viewing the car-cluttered verges on the occasion of the 'Walkabout', Councillor Barkway, his fellow Members and the Officers of the LBB felt, as so many of us have felt for a very long time, that the High Street has possibilities and that improvement was overdue. We were encouraged on the spot to go ahead with our plans and to consult with the Chamber of Commerce.

The present feeling of the Committee is that the fresh planning should not be over-elaborated. We shall keep members informed of developments.

TREES IN HAWKWOOD ESTATE

bordering Cromlix development

Road Stewards will be aware, from copies of the Committee Minutes which they receive, that the future of the lime trees bordering the Cromlix Estate was again brought into question in 1985. This item of news has not been reported previously to the general membership.

The CRA Committee firmly resisted suggestions for pollarding and a Tree Preservation Order was placed on the trees by the LBB.

The present position is that the LBB and the National Trust are keeping under review the possible danger of branches falling on houses on Cromlix Estate. Inspections by the Trust's Regional Forester and an independent tree expert indicate that the trees are healthy and unlikely to cause trouble. Should any danger to life, limb or property arise the Trust, being responsible for management of Hawkwood Estate, would have to take appropriate action. As a long-term measure, however, a tree-planting programme is contemplated in the field, away from the housing estate.

A suggestion to this effect was made by the CRA last year so that there would be replacements by the time the present limes reached the end of their life-span.

This matter illustrates only too clearly how important it is that Plans Committees should be thinking well ahead when considering planning applications which are in close proximity to attractive natural features.

ANOTHER GIFT OF TREES

Since our tree-planting operation in the High Street this January, we have received a very kind offer of a gift of more trees. The offer has come from Mr. D. J. Minch of Grove Vale and has been made in memory of his sister who died recently. This kind gesture has been gratefully acknowledged by the CRA Committee who will discuss with the LBB possible locations for planting.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FETE,

7th June

The CRA will have its usual stand at this fete, giving members and non-members an opportunity to meet the Committee and to learn of our latest activities.

Photographs or sketches of Chislehurst scenes and notable characters in the past are always of great interest. If any members possess such material which could be put on display would they please consider lending it to us on this occasion. Great care will be taken to safeguard it. Should members feel hesitant about letting valued photographs etc out of their care, we would be prepared to pay for copies so that these could be displayed and then kept in the Association's archives. Please contact Mr. P. A. Turner, CRA Publicity Committee, telephone 467 9538.

BUTCHER AND BAKER v BRADFORD & BINGLEY?

The number of Building Society offices and Estate Agents in our High Street has long been considered as being too high for the reasonable needs of local residents. The Association does, of course, object to proposed changes of use of retail shops to offices and, as reported in 'The Cockpit' (No. 43), we successfully opposed an application for a Building Society at 72 High Street. Currently there is an application (ref 86/0146) for an Estate Agent's at 109 High Street which, until recently, was a Chemist's. The CRA has lodged an objection and members may care to add their views by writing to the Chief Architect/Planner at the Civic Centre.

ALARMING SUGGESTIONS

In future it may not be possible to prevent such proposed changes from taking place for it has been suggested by a sub-committee of the Government's Property Advisory Group that the Class Use Order of the Planning Act should be amended. It proposes that the present distinction between shops and offices should be abolished and that the level to which the number of offices should rise in relation to the number of shops should be determined solely by market forces. Another alarming suggestion made by the Group is that residential properties should be permitted to be used for business purposes provided that no more than five employees would be on the premises.

The Association has communicated its views to both the Department of Environment and the Council as well as preparing the letter sent by the Bromley Federation of Residents' Associations. It was encouraging to learn that the Council shares our concern and has made strong objections similar to those of our own. If we do not succeed in getting these astonishing proposals rejected then much of what we have striven to protect will be debased for ever. Our objections have also been sent to our Member of Parliament, Mr. Roger Sims. We commend you to do likewise.

ENVIRONMENT WEEK

3-11 May

CRA sponsors wildlife lecture

Each year the Civic Trust nominates a week when societies and associations involved with environmental matters are invited to organise in their localities events which remind residents of the need to preserve and enhance local heritage which they value.

Mr. Philip Daniell of the local Board of Commons Conservators and Organiser of Environment Bromley has arranged a display of Morris Dancing on the forecourt of the Queen's Head from 1.30-2.30 p.m. on 3rd May. Conducted tours along the nearby Commons will also be arranged.

On Friday, 9th May, at 8.00 p.m. the CRA has sponsored a lecture on 'Wildlife in Waterside Bromley' to be given by Mr. G. Dickerson (Environment Bromley) in the Chislehurst Library Lecture Hall. It is hoped that members will attend in their numbers to hear what must be a new subject to most of us.

CHAIN-SAW OPERATIONS

Members who have doubts about the legality of tree-felling or trimming operations in their vicinity should contact the Tree Preservation Officer at the Civic Centre. If Miss Gibson and staff are not available because they are already out on duty, please contact the Planning Department.

'BROMLEY AFTER THE GLC'

A new LBB leaflet

'We have been asked by the Chief Executive of the LBB to draw the attention of members to this new leaflet, which will be on view in local libraries. After 31st March, 1986, responsibility for many local services will pass to our own Council. The leaflet indicates and illustrates how these services are to be managed. For those who have queries regarding various services it is important they familiarise themselves with the details provided.'

CHISLEHURST AND ELMSTEAD WOODS RAIL USERS' ASSOCIATION

We have recently received the Annual Report of CEWRUA which makes encouraging reading, the membership having grown to 158. The Report states, 'Whilst BR have been willing to meet with us to discuss problems, there is little evidence of significant change so far. Nevertheless, the Committee feels that the activities of the Association in explaining concerns of our members is influencing British Rail in a positive way . . . We have some minor successes in the restoration of two services and the lengthening of one overcrowded train. The 1985 timetable is better than the 1984 one, and the 1986 one will be better than 1985. In the longer term we hope that our continued pressure will result in better service.'

We wish the CEWRUA continued success in their efforts.

A WALK AROUND CHISLEHURST ENBRO leaflet

Since we announced publication of this ENBRO (Environment Bromley) leaflet in the 'The Cockpit', March 84, it has proved surprisingly successful with over 5,000 copies sold, and reprinted twice.

Available from Coolings shop in the High Street and at Chislehurst Library, it lists 26 places of interest in Chislehurst, with a map and illustrations. ENBRO has conducted hundreds of people on guided walks around Chislehurst using the routes shown in the leaflet.

MAY QUEEN CEREMONY, 3rd May

This year's ceremony will be held at the traditional place on the Common on Saturday, 3rd May, at 3.00 p.m. The procession will leave Red Hill Primary School at 2.30 p.m. and make its way via the High Street to the Common. Entrants for the children's fancy dress competition should report to Red Hill School at 2.15 p.m. The competition will be judged on the Common.

There are vacancies for the May Queen Retinue in 1987. Applicants must be five years old at the time of joining. Please write to Mrs. V. E. Quinn, Hon. Secretary, Chislehurst May Queen Society, 18 Belmont Lane, 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 Hon. Treasurer, Mr. R. Newport-Gwilt, 49 High Street, Chislehurst.

MEN OF KENT AND KENTISH MEN

Many residents are unaware of the existence of a local branch of the MKKM, as the County Association is briefly known. The objects of the County Association are, in the main, 'to foster a sense of pride in the County of Kent', and, 'to protect the magnificent heritage of our towns and villages and the beauty of the countryside.' To these ends the local branch organises meetings and outings in support.

Last summer a most successful luncheon was held in the Great Hall of Eltham Palace prior to the Annual General Meeting of the County Association. This was organised by the Chislehurst Branch. This year the luncheon and AGM will be held at the Winter Gardens, Margate, on Saturday, 14th June. Members of the MKKM receive copies of 'Kent', the journal of the County Society.

The local branch would welcome an injection of fresh blood into the membership. As is so often the case nowadays the burden of organising and promoting such societies is left to those in the higher age groups. With fresh and younger members the scope of activities could be greatly enlarged. Residents interested in joining the local branch should write to Mr. R. Newport-Gwilt, Hon. Treasurer, Chislehurst Branch MKKM, 49 High Street, Chislehurst.

THE NATIONAL TRUST-PETTS WOOD Membership growing

A net increase of 170 members was announced at a recent meeting of The National Trust-Petts Wood Management Committee. This was an encouraging figure but in view of the increasing cost of Woodland maintenance, one that should not encourage complacency. Money from further recruitment was still a priority. The National Trust shop in Chislehurst reported that many of the new memberships were the result of gifts given by existing members — an idea it was hoped others would follow.

This report from Bernard Earl