

THE COCKPIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHISLEHURST SOCIETY
(formerly 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. 51

Published by The Chislehurst Society, 10 Thistlemead, Chislehurst

August 1988

CARING FOR CHISLEHURST

Chairman's foreword

As we go to press one matter occupying the minds of many of our members will be the outcome of the Hewitt's Farm Public Inquiry, now in progress at the Civic Centre. It will be some time before we shall know the result of the Public Inquiry. We can only hope that the combined opposition of the Council, Residents' Associations and other environmentally-minded organisations will prevail and so keep the Green Belt intact.

Within the Executive Committee, at this moment, there are two problems in particular which are causing some concern to its members, one being the continuing vandalism in our area, the other being a fresh attack on our involvement with planning matters. It would appear, from our own observations and from reports reaching us from time to time, that acts of vandalism have accelerated in number over recent months, weekends being the peak periods. Trees outside the Library have been destroyed yet again, low retaining walls in the upper part of the High Street have been partly demolished, shrubs have been taken from the ornamental beds, bus shelters have been both damaged and covered with graffiti. All these examples of hooliganism on the part of a few are very disheartening, particularly to the Society's Sub-Committee which has worked so hard to make the High Street more attractive. Despite these setbacks the Executive Committee remains determined in its efforts to enhance the quality of our environment. We call upon members to support our efforts by calling the police when they see acts of vandalism being committed.

On odd occasions over the years the Executive Committee has been accused of "pushing its nose into private affairs" where planning applications have been concerned. This accusation has been repeated quite recently. We make no apology for returning to combat this accusation. Whilst we admit, quite readily, the right of any person to present a planning application to his or her local authority, we equally contend that it is our right — supported by hundreds of members who approve our role

— to act in a protective capacity where the environment and amenity of individual householders or of the wider community are concerned. It cannot be too heavily emphasised that the disgruntled applicant, who has had his or her application refused by the local authority, has the right to appeal to a higher authority, whilst a householder, who is about to suffer loss of amenity through having excessive extensions built next door has no right of appeal whatsoever.

Upholding planning policy

We remind members and non-members that each local authority is charged by Central Government with formulating a planning policy that lays down certain constraints. When members of the Society's Sub-Committee meet to examine planning applications, they have before them a copy of "The Bromley Borough Plan" wherein planning and building policies are set out. They do not reach their recommendations on a personal basis but on a basis of these policies, arrived at following a long process of public consultation. Government relaxations in planning policies and building regulations over recent years have made the task of local authorities in decision-making more difficult. Local authorities countrywide are complaining more and more that their jurisdiction over planning matters in their own localities — where they are the best judges — has been gravely eroded. (The Government is being increasingly hammered by its own supporters over the growing number of appeals it allows.) And so local planners and councillors are looking increasingly to local amenity societies to support them in

MEMBERS' SOCIAL

September 3rd

Our annual Social Evening with a buffet will be held at Graham Chieseman House from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday, September 3rd.

Tickets are £5 each excluding drinks and are available from Norman Bell, 8 Hoblands End, Chislehurst. Our Social is always popular and well attended. Please order your tickets early to avoid disappointment. (Cheques to be made payable to The Chislehurst Society.) We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible.

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

Vice-Chairman
H. T. G. BROWN

Editor:
P. A. TURNER

preventing unbridled development that could lead to disaster in the community.

Over the years there have been many members of this Society who have been grateful for the Executive's observations that have prevented over-large and badly designed extensions being thrust upon them by inconsiderate neighbours. Equally, the membership as a whole has been grateful to the Society for its preventing the erection of large developments that would have been completely out of character with the neighbourhood. True, we failed on one, but that is another story.

Do the vast majority of Chislehurst residents wish to see infilling and backland development proceed unchecked, or do they wish to sit in their back gardens without having over-dominant extensions on either side? Do they wish to see over-large blocks of flats cluttering the landscape, or do they wish to retain the open character of what is largely a conservation area? The steady support of so many members over the years leads us to believe that they have no wish to live in an increasingly cramped environment. Until they say otherwise we shall continue to protect the amenity of the individual and the environment of the public in general.

THE AGM

This year's AGM was very successful. It was well attended and members were most supportive in the interest they showed. The highlight of the evening was the illustrated talk given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor E. D. Barkway, on the subject of the Hewitt's Farm planning application for a massive development. The slides and statistics presented by Councillor Barkway gave clear evidence of the threats to the environment involved in this application, and members' reactions were made quite clear in their readiness to purchase the packs denoting opposition to the application. The proceeds of the sale went to swell the fighting fund which had been set up by the Orpington Amenity Society.

It was unfortunate that the date of our AGM clashed with that of the Council Meeting at which the new Mayor was being installed. This accounted for the absence of our Ward Councillors, who normally give full attendance to our AGM.

Officers elected for 1988-89

Chairman	A. T. C. Jones
Vice-Chairman	H. T. G. Brown
Secretary	T. Turner
Treasurer	N. Bell

Committee Members

K. S. Chapman, Miss N. Comport, G. R. Connolly, V. Dunleavy, C. M. Dunn, L. G. Holt, Miss P. L. Howley, J. B. Hurn, A. H. Lovell, Mrs. S. Moncho, W. Stevens, A. R. Turner, P. A. Turner, Mrs. D. J. Vine.

Sub-Committees

Planning	T. Turner (Chairman), H. T. G. Brown (Secretary), L. G. Holt.
High Street	H. T. G. Brown (Chairman), V. Dunleavy (Secretary), K. S. Chapman, Miss N. Comport, G. R. Connolly, J. B. Hurn, Mrs. D. J. Vine
Trees	Miss P. L. Howley (Chairman), Miss N. Comport, T. Turner

Public Transport	K. S. Chapman (Chairman), Miss N. Comport
Traffic and Road Safety	K. S. Chapman
Anti-litter	A. H. Lovell
Editor of "The Cockpit"	P. A. Turner
Membership Secretary	K. S. Chapman
Minuting Secretary	A. R. Turner
Delegates	
Advisory Panel on Conservation Areas	C. M. Dunn T. Turner
Orpington and Chislehurst Road Safety Consultative Panel	K. S. Chapman
Bromley Federation of Residents' Associations	A. T. C. Jones, A. R. Turner
Flood Committee	A. R. Turner
London Green Belt Council	L. G. Holt
Airfields Environment Federation	Mrs. M. Holt

"IMPROVING OUR TOWNS"

Martin Bradshaw's talk

The Society's first venture into arranging public meetings on environmental themes has proved to be highly successful. On June 15, Mr. Martin Bradshaw, Director of the Civic Trust, visited the Society to give a talk on "Improving Our Towns". This was warmly appreciated by the many members who came to the meeting in the Main Hall of Coopers School. The talk was full of interesting ideas and was illustrated by excellent slides. Although it had been concerned with improving towns in general, much of its advice was relevant to the future of Chislehurst. A report on these aspects will be produced for further study. In concluding his talk Mr. Bradshaw emphasised the importance of local amenity societies working closely with other local organisations and with the local authority for the benefit of the community. He highly praised the results of past efforts to preserve the Chislehurst environment but mentioned one of our current problems — the one bus shelter he had seen here was one of the most dreadful he had ever seen!

At the conclusion of the evening Mr. Bradshaw was thanked by Mrs. Jean Morgan, who is one of the Borough's planning officers liaising with the High Street Improvement Sub-Committee on environmental improvement schemes.

The Executive Committee plans to arrange talks of a similar nature which will be open to non-members as well as members.

Footnote

At a recent reception, held at the Civic Centre, and hosted by the Mayor of Bromley, Mrs. Doreen Moir, representatives from many local amenity societies were present to hear the Mayor stress the importance of caring for our environment. Her remarks were supported later in the evening by the Councillor Barkway, Leader of the Council, and by the Chief Architect/Planner, Mr. Colin Davis, both of whom emphasised the need for residents to work closely with their Councillors and Borough Officers to improve their environment. The Chislehurst Society was singled out as one which was already responding with vigour and imagination to this need.

HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENTS

concerted efforts bringing results

Members will have noted that the Council has launched its latest programme of improvements for the High Street. The re-paving of the High Street, from the Library to Willow Grove, is well under way at the time of writing and is part of a parcel of improvements agreed earlier between the Council and the Society's representatives from the High Street Sub-Committee.

At the other end of the High Street a joint scheme with owners will be drawn up for improving the Midland Bank and Britannia Building frontages. It is also hoped to build a brick facade over the massive concrete wall at the front end of the Red Cross car park.

In Royal Parade it is proposed to install Victorian style lamps with hanging baskets and to mark parking bays with brindle blocks, with a raising of the tree stations. These improvements and those being initiated in other High Streets of the Borough follow the suggestion, made some time ago by the Leader of the Council, that the Borough's High Streets should be upgraded.

It is most encouraging to record that a very close relationship has now been built up between officers of the Chief Architect/Planner's Department and the members of the Society's High Street Sub-Committee. Following a meeting of both parties, held at the Civic Centre last year, the Society is now able to consult with a team from the Planning Department led by Mrs. Morgan.

Apart from this collaboration with the planning team members of our High Street Sub-Committee have met with officers of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Board of Conservators to explain our aims for the High Street. It is gratifying to report that we have received the fullest support from both organisations.

There are many aspects of the High Street that need improving — signs, advertising boards, certain frontages, etc. These are presently receiving detailed consideration. With the co-operation of our retailers, and with the support and guidance of our Council officers we look forward to the time when our High Street will be one of which we can be justly proud.

Tom Brown, Vincent Dunleavy and their colleagues are rendering a most important service to our community.

ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC

The Chief Engineer has recommended that a mini-roundabout be introduced at the junction of Leeson's Hill with Orpington Road for an experimental period of six months. If this proves successful the traffic signal scheme will be dropped. We are asking that the results of the experiment be made known officially to the residents and that the matter be then re-examined.

The Road Safety Committee has recommended that a pelican crossing be installed in Perry Street, near its junction with Beaverwood Road. The police have been unable to recruit a replacement for the crossing patrol operative who retired in November 1987 and parents of pupils at Beaverwood School for Girls have requested the provision of a pedestrian crossing on this very busy road. The Society has, over the years, expressed its concern about the amount and speed of traffic on this route, especially in relation to the safety of the pupils. We welcome this long overdue proposal.

Following a well-organised traffic survey, conducted by Mr. A. R. Turner with assistance from members in Lubbock Road, overwhelming support was given to the

suggestion that there should be restrictions on the speed of traffic using Lubbock Road and its junctions with other roads. A letter from a Senior Engineer of the LBB stated that the possibility of road humps had been examined, but because of the shape of the junction of Lubbock Road with Lower Camden the Department of Transport's criteria for the installation of road humps could not be met. Further representations by the Society and residents have resulted in a recommendation from the Traffic Management Sub-Committee of the LBB that an experimental accident remedial scheme be implemented. This means narrowing the junction of Lower Camden with Lubbock Road and the installation of a bollard at the junction. This will prevent "cutting" the junction which is so wide.

PARKING ON FOOTWAYS AND GRASS VERGES

illegal parkers prosecuted

The London Borough of Bromley's procedure for dealing with illegal parking is as follows:—

(1) When a vehicle is seen parked on the pavement or on a grass verge by the Chief Engineer's Inspectors (or is reported by a member of the public) a Notice of Intended Prosecution is placed on the windscreen together with an accompanying letter inviting a contribution of £10 towards the cost of the damage caused by vehicles being parked on the footway or grass verges. This practice has been adopted having regard to the very large sums expended each year on the maintenance of damaged pavements and verges.

(2) If there is no response, the case is handed over to the Borough Secretary's legal staff who send a recorded delivery letter to the registered owner again seeking the £10 contribution and requesting details of who was actually driving the vehicle at the time of the alleged offence.

(3) If there is still no response, summonses are issued.

Since the pavement parking ban was introduced in January 1985 some 2,500 Notices of Intended Prosecution have been issued. About three-quarters of offenders have paid the £10 contribution, but during 1987 alone 115 prosecutions were brought in the Magistrate's Court, most resulting in average fines of £15 plus £10 towards the Council's costs.

(Note: Whilst the Council's practice for dealing with footway/grass verge parking covers the whole of the Borough there are certain areas/streets which are exempt from the ban — this means that footway parking is permitted. Appropriate signs are shown at each end of the section of street where pavement parking can take place.)

M.K.K.M.

caring for Kent

Earlier this year the Chislehurst and North-West Kent Branch of the Men of Kent and Kentish Men launched a campaign to increase its membership. Incidentally, it needs to be pointed out that membership of the M.K.K.M. includes the "Fair Maids of Kent". The Association is not a "Men Only" organisation.

The Association's Executive Committee has recently expressed its concern that the branches, in the main, are having to be managed by the older generation and that younger generations are not joining in sufficient numbers to enable a smooth transition of responsibility to take place.

When one considers what the Association has contributed since its foundation in 1897 to the preservation of the rich heritage and environment of a county steeped in history, it merits the full backing of all those who are concerned that this lovely corner of England should not be destroyed piecemeal.

The commencement of work on the Channel Tunnel has dismayed many of the County's residents, and we are already aware of some of the distasteful repercussions which will arise out of this huge exercise. There are, no doubt, many more threats to come, judging by recent items in the press, and to counter these there is a need to build the strength of the County Association to a point where it will be a force to be reckoned with. Local branches over the years have been content to organise talks on various aspects of Kent's history and to arrange visits to places of historic interest. Now, they are presented with a more immediate challenge — that of combatting the commercial threat to our lovely countryside.

You can play your part in countering this threat by joining your local branch and playing an active part in its affairs. Act now and write to the Hon. Treasurer, R. Newport-Gwilt, 500 Footh Cray Road, Eltham S.E.9, for details of membership of the Chislehurst and North-West Kent Branch. You will be assured of a warm welcome to the meetings and excursions.

ROAD STEWARDS

The following Road Stewards have recently resigned owing to various circumstances:—

Mr. F. W. Baker (Royal Parade), Mr. S. Cowper-Smith (The Meadow, Heathfield, Heathley End), Mr. J. Kinsella (St. Paul's Cray Road).

We thank them most warmly for their services to the Society. Frank Baker and John Kinsella have contributed at least forty years' service between them, for which we are eternally grateful.

Mrs. J. P. C. Douglas has taken over Royal Parade from Mr. Baker, leaving Manor Park to be looked after by Mrs. Lancefield and Mrs Moncho of Manor Park.

Welcome to new Road Stewards

The following have kindly volunteered to become Road Stewards:—

Mr. J. W. Burne, covering Furzeffeld Close,
Dr. J. Gowing, covering The Meadow and Heathley End,
Mrs. M. Hogg, covering part of Clifford Avenue, Grange Drive, Melbury Close,
Mrs. S. Lancefield, covering Manor Park and roads off Manor Park (assisted by Mrs. Moncho),
Mrs. J. Rudkin, covering St. Paul's Cray Road,
Mrs. J. Taylor, covering Heathfield,
Mrs. P. M. Taylor, covering Old Hill,
Mr. E. Wray, covering Empress Drive,
Mr. R. Wright, covering Green Lane (even numbers).

We are most grateful to the above-named for undertaking a task which is so vital to the efficient running of the Society.

ELMSTEAD LANE

welcome to 150 new members

We welcome over 150 new members, representing more than 72 households in Elmstead Lane. Our newly appointed Road Steward, Mr. G. W. Godfrey, is to be congratulated on obtaining such splendid support for The Society.

GARDEN BONFIRES

new LBB Leaflet available

Despite two public appeals by the Chief Environmental Health Officer a couple of years ago, complaints relating to bonfires still arise. The whole of Chislehurst was made a Smoke Control Area some years ago, but it is thought that many people do not realize this. After consultation with the Society, the Environmental Health Department has produced a leaflet explaining the legal position and offering guidance to householders on "preventing annoyance to neighbours".

It is hoped that wide distribution of the leaflet will help to reduce the number of complaints arising in Chislehurst. Road Stewards who think that a house-to-house distribution of the leaflet in their area of Chislehurst could be beneficial are invited to inform MR. V. DUNLEAVY, 21 SANDY RIDGE, BR7 5DP (Tel. 467 5674), who will make appropriate arrangements.

OBITUARY

Philip Daniell

We are sad to report the death of Philip Daniell, founder of Environment Bromley and Keston Countryside Day. Nicknamed "Mr. Environment", Philip had worked tirelessly over the years to maintain the attractions of Bromley's countryside. As leader of Bromley Consumers Group he launched Environment Bromley in 1980. He organised walks in different parts of the Borough and would often be found leading groups of ramblers around Chislehurst, pointing out features of interest and explaining their history. Latterly, he had become a member of the Chislehurst and St. Paul's Cray Board of Conservators and had thrown himself into this new role with enthusiasm. When the Council purchased Scadbury, Philip Daniell joined the panel of representatives from various environmental organisations, who had been invited to discuss with the Councillors and their Officers the future use of Scadbury.

In recognition of his services to the Borough he was honoured on April 22 with the Mayor of Bromley's award.

The gap he has left will be difficult to fill for his efforts to preserve and enhance our environment were ceaseless. We are grateful for all he has done for us. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his widow, Mrs. Jessie Daniell.

"Dick" Ellis

Close on the heels of the news concerning Philip Daniell came the announcement of the passing of Mr. G. R. Ellis of 85 Empress Drive. "Dick" Ellis, as he was widely known, had recently relinquished the Chairmanship of the Board of Chislehurst and St. Paul's Cray Commons Conservators, which he had held for a number of years. After taking up residence in Chislehurst in 1949 he and his wife, whom he sadly lost a few years ago after a long illness, plunged themselves into the activities of the Rotary Club, from which so many local charities have benefited. Dick's contribution to the Rotary Club's affairs was such that he was nominated for a Paul Harris Fellowship — the highest recognition in Rotarian circles. Not only was he a former President of the Rotary Club, he was also a former President of the Chamber of Commerce. His service to Chislehurst over a long period was fittingly recognised when a large gathering met at Christ Church to attend his funeral service. Our sympathy is extended to Peter, his son, and Christine, his daughter, and to the grandchildren.
