
THE COCKPIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHISLEHURST SOCIETY
Registered Charity No. 298413

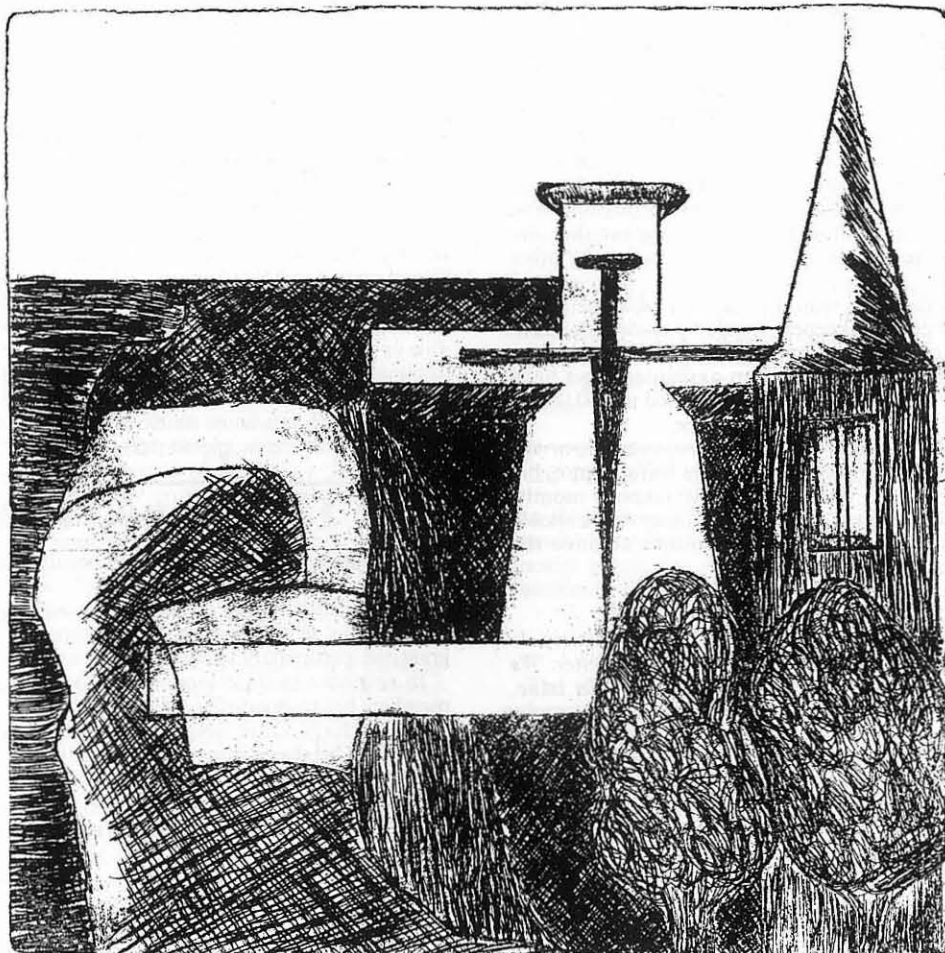
FOUNDED 1934 REGISTERED WITH THE CIVIC TRUST

*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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"Cover for *The Cockpit*". This design by Alison Hinds UVI Coopers School 1992, was awarded an Alun Jones Environmental Studies prize last year. She executed her design as a coloured dryprint. (In dryprint engraving a drawing is scratched into the surface of a soft metal plate, creating burrs which retain the printing ink.)

Chairman:
H. T. G. BROWN
(081-467 3790)

Editor:
Ms F. Follin
7 Kincaig, Lubbock Road, Chislehurst

Commons cuts — Bromley replies

From Mr Robbie Stoakes, Director of Leisure Services, London Borough of Bromley.
To The Editor, *The Cockpit*.

I read with interest the article entitled "**Commons Cutters Cut — Woodchoppers' Bawl**" which was submitted by the Chislehurst and St Paul's Cray Commons Conservators. In view of its content, I feel compelled to respond.

The article mentioned the reduction in the grant issued to the Commons Conservators by the council on an annual basis. I should point out that at no time did the Council recommend how this saving was to be achieved, but using the expertise of officers in the Leisure Services Department and following extensive discussions with the chairman of the Conservators, a number of suggestions were made.

The Council is in its third year of subjecting its open spaces service to compulsory competitive tendering and all gardening and ground-keeping duties in the Borough are now carried out under contract. This has resulted in a considerable reduction in cost and it was felt that a similar approach could be adopted by the Conservators to achieve their spending targets without reducing any of the service previously offered by the Commons keepers. The Council went as far as to provide the Conservators with a full specification, plans, and contract documents which could be used to make the transaction as painless as possible. The work was tendered although it would appear that the Conservators have chosen to achieve the saving by other means.

I must also take issue with the statement that the Board was told that three of its keepers should be made redundant. This was a decision taken entirely by the Conservators. Also it is untrue to imply that an agreement had been reached to save £18,000 which was increased to £30,000 at the May 1992 Leisure Services Committee.

The Committee had received a *proposal* from the Conservators to reduce their costs by the lower figure, but voted to re-affirm its decision already taken 3 months previously. It was pointed out that the Conservators should consider their large plant reserve fund to achieve the necessary saving.

Editors note:

Your chairman has pointed out that the Conservators do not agree with some of the points raised in this letter. We will give them the opportunity to reply in our next issue. Other readers' comments are invited.

In the merry month of May . . .

. . . your Society will be holding another of our popular **Social Evenings**. All members are cordially invited to join members of the executive committee at Foxbury in Kemnal Road, from 7.30pm on Friday 7th May. Members will be able to enjoy a light supper from the finger-buffet as they socialise with old friends and make some new ones. The ticket price will be £7.85. As usual, Foxbury's well-stocked pay-bar will be open and members will be able to enjoy the gardens as well as the charming house.

Further details are available from Pat Bushell, 'Poynings', 48 Green Way, Chislehurst 467 2118. Members are reminded that tickets are limited by the terms of Foxbury's licence and always sell out fast!

Joy Jones

Members will be saddened to learn of the sudden death of Mrs Joy Jones on her way to your Society's executive committee meeting on 21 October.

Joy joined the executive committee early in 1989, after the death in harness of her husband Alun, our much-respected chairman. For many years before, she had been an energetic road steward and Alun's devoted supporter in all his Society work. On the executive committee she concentrated on organising our Socials, which she raised to new levels, the duties of membership secretary and the work of the publicity sub-committee. She also continued as road steward. Despite the volume of her other voluntary work she brought to all her Society tasks a whole-hearted commitment, a never-failing drive, and an ever-present interest in people and personal relations. Her buoyant energy and warm-hearted personality will be greatly missed, not only by your Society, but also by the many other voluntary organisations to whom she gave such generous service.

A Right 'Royal' Occasion

On May 1st this year, Chislehurst will celebrate the seventieth annual ceremony of the crowning of the May Queen on our ancient Common.

To celebrate this event, the May Queen Society is inviting all past Chislehurst May Queens and Princes to join in this year's ceremonies. Anyone interested is asked to contact the May Queen Society's secretary, Vera Quin, on 081 467 2795 or write to her at 18 Belmont Lane, Chislehurst. If you know an ex-May Queen or Prince who has since left the area, please pass on this invitation.

Our Threatened Heritage

English Heritage has published a consultation paper titled "Managing England's Heritage" which proposes widespread devolution of its powers and responsibilities, giving many of them off to local authorities and reducing grant aid, particularly to conservation areas.

In response to their request for comments, one of our members has responded as follows.

To Richard Dumville, English Heritage (London Region), Chesham House, 30 Warwick Street, London, W1R 5RD.

Dear Sir,

I write in response to your invitation to comment on "Managing England's Heritage".

Whereas under the GLC's Historic Buildings Department such buildings were well safeguarded, the record of many local councils is abysmal.

Indeed many councils have been criticised by both individuals and responsible local associations as absolute vandals. A sentiment with which I agree. I still regret with sorrow the unnecessary destruction in 1963 by the then local council of our much loved Water Tower, which provided both a beautiful "frame" to this part of Chislehurst and comfortable homes for two families. What is so deplorable is that there was enough space to build a road round it leaving it undisturbed. No other European country would have perpetrated such vandalism.

The influence and power of English Heritage need to be

strengthened just as those of the tribe of ruthless developers, who terrify local councils fearful of costs being awarded against them in persistent planning appeals, need to be curbed.

May I commend to your regular attention the "Nooks and Corners" articles by "Piloti" in *Private Eye*, in particular that of No. 807 dated 20th November 1992 concerning English Heritage.

For a start why not replace Jocelyn Stevens by "Piloti" (who possibly also answers to the name of Gavin Stamp). As for his friend, Lord Palumbo, and his Mappin & Webb development which you tried so hard to prevent, what a pity he cannot be deported preferably attached to the crude lump of rock he donated at a cost of £20,000 to St. Stephen's Walbrook. Weighing 10 tons, the floor had to be reinforced to prevent its descent into the crypt. In spite of this injury inflicted on his church its vicar, Chad Varah, wrote to the press supporting his benefactor's plans for the deplorable development just around the corner. Yet another triumph for Mammon.

What is needed is a powerful, adequately financed English Heritage, not one starved of the cash your proposed changes would produce. You could not do better than accept the London Forum's response to those proposals.

Only a more powerful English Heritage can prevent the loss of much of our heritage. It would be more fitting for you and your colleagues to have the backbone to stand up for such an important principle rather than give way to the official pressures undoubtedly being imposed on you.

I urge you to do just this.

Police Centenary Celebrations

On Thursday 24th June 1993 Chislehurst Police Station celebrates its centenary and to commemorate this event Inspector Kim Botting, the officer in charge of the station, has arranged for Mr James McGregor, a well known water colour artist, to paint a picture of the Police Station. Mr James McGregor has now completed the picture after generously agreeing to paint it at no cost. All the proceeds from the sale of limited edition prints taken from the original painting will go to the charity for Muscular Dystrophy.

James McGregor is a well known watercolour artist who in the past has painted pictures for the Royal Family.

Inspector Kim Botting said "The original idea of painting a picture of Chislehurst Police Station came from one of our officers, PC Adrian Lindsey and I thought it was a good way to commemorate the centenary. Fortunately, I was introduced to James McGregor by PC Paul Beard who is also attached to Orpington Division."

Inspector Botting said, "James McGregor and I then approached Marlin Graphics, of Sidcup, who agreed to make up a plate from the original painting. Marlin Graphics have done a wonderful job." Marlin made no charge for making the printing plate; neither did Terry Jarrold of Invicta Printers of Chislehurst, who willingly printed a limited edition of 850 from the plate of the original painting without fee. Inspector Botting said that Invicta Printers had done an excellent job printing them.

The limited edition prints have been personally signed and numbered by the artist. These have been on sale since 25th November 1992 from Chislehurst Police Station at a cost of £25. All proceeds from the sale of the painting will be donated to the charity Muscular Dystrophy. The prints can be obtained from Inspector Botting, PS Hughes, PC Cottrell and PC Harris, Monday to Friday from 6am to 10pm at Chislehurst Police Station. Enquires regarding the

sale can be made by telephoning 081-697-9521. Several local galleries will also be selling the prints.

It is hoped that £20,000 will be raised. One of the reasons for deciding to give the donation to Muscular Dystrophy is that unfortunately James McGregor suffers from this. James McGregor normally sells his prints (Limited Editions) for £120 each.

Special Events

Inspector Botting said, "We have also sorted out a programme of events for the centenary celebrations to be held at the station on Saturday, 26th June 1993. On that day we intend to have an exhibition depicting 100 years of Chislehurst and a concert with a choir and music.

'We have set up a committee consisting of personnel attached to Chislehurst and Orpington Division, comprising PS Rod Hughes, PC John Lowe, PC Barry Cottrill, PC Mick Halse, PC Peter Logsdon, PC Frank Harris, PC Karen Hartley, PC Douglas Skins and Sybil Price."

Some members of the Chislehurst community, personnel attached to Orpington Division, councillors, the mayor, commissioner and DAC Osland of 3 Area, ex Police Office of Chislehurst, VIP's and celebrity guests will be invited.

On this date numbers 1-850 will be placed in a box; a celebrity guest will be invited to pick out a number and the person holding the winning number will win the original painting. It is hoped that this will be an additional incentive for people to buy the prints.

For the evening of 26th June 1993, Chislehurst's Home Beat Officer, PC Connell, has organised a reunion for retired and ex police officers who were attached to Chislehurst. Any such officers wishing to attend the celebrations during the day, or the reunion in the evening, should please contact PC Connell at Chislehurst Police Station.

The rapidly changing face of Kent

The Council for the Protection of Rural England (Kent Branch) has published over 200 photographs submitted by amenity groups and members of the public on this theme in a hardbacked book entitled

FROM GARDEN TO GATEWAY

The Changing Face of Kent

Photographed by the people of Kent

The book contains optimistic entries but also unfortunately many sorry sights — from motorways across the White Cliffs to photographic examples of the decline in our traditional 'Garden' role, as hopfields and orchards are grubbed out. Many of the photographs could represent one of the last opportunities any of us will have to view that particular Kentish scene.

The rapidity of change in our county is stressed. Unlike many a nostalgic look at "the way things were" reflecting change over many decades past, **most of the photographs in FROM GARDEN TO GATEWAY, depicting scenes that have been, or are about to be, lost forever, were submitted during a single two year period, 1990 and 1991.**

The book is available from most libraries, bookshops [ISBN 1 874 344 00 0] or direct from CPRE Kent Branch, priced £10.95 plus £1.50 post and packing. Published on a 'semi-commercial' basis, the book will benefit all four Kent environmental groups: CPRE, Kent Trust, KFAS, and the National Trust.

CPRE Kent Branch, Coldharbour Farm, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5DE.

GIVE NOW — PAY LATER

Does this title appeal to you? Under this inviting slogan we are appealing for bequests in order to buy our own headquarters building — donations, of course, would be equally welcome. People may worry about their ability to maintain their living standards and find it difficult to contemplate parting with substantial portions of their assets during their lifetimes. We suggest a painless way of giving by making your Society a bequest in your will or by adding an appropriate codicil. Because your Society is a Registered Charity, any such bequests will escape Inheritance Tax.

Ever since its foundation in 1934, your Society has been run 'on a shoestring' with only voluntary labour. We do not even possess a storeroom let alone any premises. Present and former officers have spare rooms and garages so full of papers and various records that they are 'out of bounds' to their owners!

When we do succeed in obtaining our own headquarters premises we shall not only be able to continue our present work of preserving and enhancing the character of Chislehurst but, in addition, we shall be able to provide a much needed meeting place and other facilities for members. These could also be made available to other appropriate local groups.

Your Society does not wish to diminish the magnificent work of our great national charities but it is surely worthwhile to give to our own charity, working for the good of the area where we have all enjoyed living. We are confident that there are enough well-disposed and comfortably-off people in Chislehurst for this policy to succeed in due course. We hope that you agree and will do your bit to prove us right.

Putting out the rubbish

From Pat Ellender, Environment Promotions Coordinator, London Borough of Bromley.

To All Residents' Associations,

It has been noticed that more and more householders are putting out their rubbish for the dustmen to collect, rather than leaving it for collection from the point where it is usually stored. It is appreciated that there may be special reasons for doing this where, for example, families are all out and a gate would have to be left open all day for the crew to get to the bin. The security of your home is important, so is peace of mind.

However, it is clear that some people are under the misunderstanding that they must put their rubbish out. This is not so. The refuse contract stipulates that the crew will collect your rubbish from your point of storage, provided that they have access. If householders prefer to make it more readily accessible by placing the suitably contained refuse out in the front garden or drive, then the crew will certainly not complain!

There are two important problems associated with putting the rubbish out to which I would like to draw your attention and ask if you could publicise within your association by whatever means available to you.

The first derives from people putting out sacks, etc. of waste too early. This leaves them open to attack by cats, dogs, foxes and other vermin which, if they learn food is often available, return frequently to tear open the containers and spread everything all over the place. The resultant mess is unpleasant to clear up and not a task the refuse contractors would undertake. Prevention is better than cure

and householders are asked to put out sacks, etc. on the day of collection. If that is not possible, then please leave out a dustbin or similar container with a lid.

Another and potentially very dangerous practice on the increase is that of putting the rubbish sacks out onto the path or verge in front of the houses. This must not be done and is illegal. Anything dumped in this manner on the highway is an obstruction which could cause a blind person to trip and fall. After dark, these obstructions are a hazard to all.

If anyone does have a problem with refuse collection, they are very welcome to contact this office.

Whilst writing, I am taking the opportunity to draw attention to our range of current information leaflets. Some deal with ways of reducing waste by composting and recycling, while others provide information about services which may be of interest.

Copies are available from this office should your members wish to see them.

Thank you for your time and co-operation in dealing with these issues. It is the marvellous partnership between residents, the Council and its contractors which have helped make Bromley so "Clean & Tidy". By attending to details such as the above, we will be able to maintain and improve the standards.

Donald Ball

The death of Mr Donald Ball, architect and former member of your Society's executive committee, occurred last November. Members knew he had been suffering from ill-health for some time but, nevertheless, his passing came as a shock to all his friends on the committee. Donald will be remembered for his hard work to prevent the destruction of 'The Cedars' and also for his valued advice on planning matters. Now that restoration of 'The Cedars' is practically completed, it is fitting that Donald's efforts for this and other causes should be remembered.

Birdwatchers welcome!

An Invitation is extended to Chislehurst residents to take part in early May in one of the "Bird Walks" which will explore the National Trust properties of Hawkwood and Petts Wood, as well as St Paul's Cray Common, a small part of Scadbury, and Hoblingwell Wood.

The Walks, which are led by Ken Palmer who is a member of the National Trust's Petts Wood Management Committee, serve as an introduction to both the resident woodland birds and the recently arrived summer migrants.

Such is the popularity of the Walks, which originally were held just once a year, two dates are now offered: Saturday mornings 1st and 8th May. There is no charge but to reserve a place on that date of your choice, please telephone Ken Palmer on 0689 822646.

National Trust Lectures

Members may be interested to know that there is a full programme of lectures planned for this year, including, on 22 April, A.G.M. and film 'Personal Pleasures: Castle Drogo by the National Trust. Enquiries: 0689 832911. To be held at Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Rd, Orpington at 8pm.