

BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

N E W S L E T T E R

AUTUMN 1974

The plastic flowers outside the 'Swan' are fading, the Whit Fete is a sun-soaked memory, the Police Station stands, its feet in its building rubbish, ready for its 1984 role, and the evening shadows across the lawn are all in the wrong places. We brace ourselves for the dampness and dark of winter. This is the time for looking forward and backward. What has your Association been up to and what has it in store?

'A little rule, a little sway ...'

Its a long time since we, in conjunction with the Berkhamsted Council of Churches unveiled your District Councillors to you in the Baptist Church. Adept as the politicians they are at dodging issues, the meeting was a useful one not least for shewing how the old UDC style has now disappeared in the larger, political pool of the Dacorum District Council. Our local representatives seem politically inexperienced by contrast.

A visit to their public meeting – all the performers are now paid by you and me – is instructive. Political affiliations are supreme. Your representatives from the Association attend each month in the public gallery. Do go along and see and hear; a cross between the TUC and Westminster in microcosm, it shews what happens when common sense disappears in the acid of politics – a cloudy distasteful mixture.

Meetings of the full Council are held in Hemel Hempstead Town Hall at 7.30 p.m. Dates : 24 Sept; 5 Nov; 17 Dec; 28 Jan and 11 March. Remember a 'silent majority' is a good bed for politicians to lie on – or jump on. You get the local government and governors you deserve.

'Majestic, though in ruin ...' ?

Shall we weep salt tears when that battered façade has been swept away and red brick and brushed aluminium has taken its place ? No, not your dear spouse, but the Town Hall. The DDC have already begun action on the other side of the High Street, basically to help out the societies who need somewhere to meet. The old Council Chamber in the Civic Centre is to be refurbished sufficiently to provide an assembly room for meetings and small concerts and plays. Completion by Christmas has been mentioned : a goodly Christmas box. Smaller meetings can be accommodated in the existing committee room.

For the longer term, the Dacorum District Council is examining the whole question of the provision of community facilities in Berkhamsted and district. This study will take into account what existing facilities there are and the future requirements of the people of the town. All options are open including a brand-new building on a new site.

It would be helpful to know your views – the Chairman of the Association is at 42 Gaveston Drive.

All this is hopeful and we as an Association applaud both the efforts of the DDC to provide good community facilities in Berkhamsted and their determination to do everything possible to bring plans to fruition. We assure them of our goodwill and willingness to co-operate.

Incidentally, did you know that 1975 is European Architectural Heritage Year. This intends that local communities should look for and preserve some building which forms part of our architectural heritage. No prizes for naming a suitable candidate !

Perhaps the most annoying aspect of the Town Hall saga is that the ratepayers of Berkhamsted have paid £26,000 in 1973-74 in professional fees for designing a Hall that is not to be. While your Committee were of the opinion that this expenditure had been incurred in good faith we felt it our duty, both to ratepayers and councillors to seek the impartial views of the District Auditor on the validity of the expenditure. The District Auditor considered that the plans of the UDC came to nought through a combination of unfortunate circumstances which could not have easily been foreseen at the time the expenditure was authorised, "The best laid schemes o'mice an'men"

'Let us sit upon the ground ...'

Our winter programme began early with the entertaining and provocative Greene Brothers' Charivaria Show of their childhood memories. Our apologies to those of you who missed this unique occasion which attracted reporters from The Times, The Daily Telegraph and The Daily Mail as well as a tentative enquiry from the Michael Parkinson programme ! To those who were not on holiday and joined over 250 others in a packed King's Hall, you might be interested to know that the photographs of his boyhood passed up to Graham Greene by Mrs. Chandler, were taken by her father Mr. J.T.Newman, the famous Berkhamsted photographer whose studio was at Dean Incent's around the turn of the century.

On Friday 27 September we have Chief Inspector Bamsey to speak in the Gable Hall on 'Your Police', The Chief Inspector intends speaking on the role of the Police generally and not specifically within Berkhamsted, so please don't ask why your local bobby wears sideboards.

Sadly, it seems that Mr. Guthrie Moir's talk on 21st October will have to be postponed, Mr. Moir was involved in a rail accident and as we write it seems impossible that he will be well enough to speak. We are trying to arrange an alternative, so please watch the posters.

'Will you walk a little faster ...' ?

The Great Autumn Ramble takes place on Sunday October 13th. It starts at 2,30 p.m. from the corner of Cross Oak Road and Shootersway. Mr and Mrs Michael Tollit have kindly offered tea to the intrepid. Gird up your loins and take the opportunity to see something of our lovely local countryside - before the bulldozers get there.

'Grin like a dog, and run about the City ...'

If the Plastic Smile and Promise Era is under way as you hold this, please look for posters to see whether it has been possible to arrange a 'Meet your Candidates' assemblage.

At the initiative of the Association, a meeting of French language teachers from local schools was held to discuss educational links with schools in Beaune in Burgundy ; this followed the visit of English language teachers from Beaune during the Wine and Cheese weekend in June.

Plans are now afoot for 3 or 4 teachers together with 1 or 2 members of your Committee to visit Beaune in November with a hope that some form of exchange visits for the 13+ age range can be arranged in 1975. For the 11 and 12 year olds plans are in hand for classes to exchange cassettes, slides, letters and the like. We also hope to arrange a Beaune evening for members sometime in 1975.

Talking of members your committee are very conscious of the tremendous support which you give, them in their activities. Some members have asked why our meetings are (with the sole exception of the Annual General Meeting) open to all-comers. The Committee have decided therefore that when the meeting is essentially recreational there will be a charge for non-members at 20p per head. Ideas are also being discussed for expanding our membership but more of this later.

'Bits and Pieces ...'

The Association have been in touch with British Rail to try to get Shopper's Return ticket holders on to an earlier train than the 9.56 a.m. The Chairman eagerly pursues a Sewage Rate correspondence We are exploring common ground with the Tring Residents' Association DDC planning applications concerning Berkhamsted may be inspected at the Civic Centre any Tuesday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. this at the Association's request - ask for Mr. Meadows the Association is assisting the Chiltern Society's work with footpaths in our area our representative on LADACAIM may be redundant if the package holiday air traffic subsidies you're safer at the Berkhamsted Swimming Pool with more attendants now provided - at the Association's suggestion Our plans for improving the appearance area of the canal side are under way with the British Waterways : be prepared to turn out for Operation Cleansweep

Footnote from the Chair

Your editor has said it all - or nearly so. There are many other matters which reach our Committee agenda but which are no longer news. Our monthly committee meetings are like an obstacle race and but for a hard-working and efficient committee would be nearly impossible to complete in the 2½ hours maximum time allotted. A Happy Christmas to you all.

KEN SHERWOOD

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE 1974

Chairman:	Ken Sherwood, 42 Gaveston Drive.	5158
Vice-Chairman:	Alan Havelock, Linden House, Barncroft Road.	2140
Treasurer:	Stuart Rosser, c/o Lloyds Bank, High Street.	71271
Secretary:	Megan Peplow, 20 Millfield.	3089
Mem. Secretary:	Beryl Edwards, Amberley, Graemsdyke Road.	2013
Mrs. Hilary Talbot Ponsonby,	Edgeworth House, Northchurch.	5882
Mrs. Anne Sanders,	4 Little Heath Cottages, Potten End.	4142
Mr. Norman Binks,	22 Lombardy Drive.	6300
Mr. George Cameron,	34 Castle Hill Avenue.	3774
Mr. Michael Day,	Snelston, Shrublands Road.	2716
Mr. Henry Fisher,	Fairlight, Meadway.	4527
Mr. Roger Ford,	Ardraccan, Cross Oak Road,	5027
Mr. Ray Miles,	17 Ashridge Rise.	
Mr. David Sherratt,	Dean Incent's House, High Street.	
Mr. Max Struthers,	51 Cedar Road.	4345
Mr. Peter Taylor,	84 Cross Oak Road.	3227

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