



**Berkhamsted
Citizens
Association**

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1976

We were delighted that our last newsletter letter received such a good press. Long may it continue! Whether we are correct in our contention about the increasing lack of interest in the town's affairs is a matter for debate, but a poll of only 25% in the recent County Council by-election hardly demonstrates great enthusiasm. In the coming months we hope to fan the flame - presuming, of course, that a few smouldering embers remain.

The By-Pass

As we go to press John Horam announced in the House of Commons that he has decided that the King's Langley/Berkhamsted by-passes should be built as all purpose trunk roads and not as a motorway. The width and route of the Berkhamsted section are still under consideration but we hope that draft proposals will be published early in 1977.

The 'Relief' Road

This refers to that other road to relieve congestion in the High Street. Under the headline "Call to halt road scheme" the Gazette of 15th October reported a resolution passed by the Town Council opposing the provision of a relief road and urging that such a scheme should be abandoned in view of the prevailing state of the economy. What did this mean and what are the implications?

Proposals for a new road intended to relieve congestion in the High Street were put forward in 1972 by the County Council in their "Berkhamsted Town Study" - a report prepared by their planning staff for public discussion. For the short term, up to 1981, the alternatives suggested in the report were (1) leave things as they are, (2) drive a "distributor road" down St. John's Well Lane and then roughly parallel with the canal to the first turn in Lower King's Road where a roundabout would be constructed. East-bound traffic would be diverted from the A.41 along this route, returning via Lower King's Road to rejoin the High Street at the traffic lights. West-bound traffic would continue to use the A.41, which would become one-way from the traffic lights to St. John's Well Lane.

After 1981, the report foresaw the increase in traffic continuing and necessitating a relief road bypassing the shopping centre altogether. This road would draw off east-bound traffic from the "distributor road" at the roundabout and return it to the High Street, at Water Lane, at Castle Street, at Ravens Lane or Holliday Street, or opposite Swing Gate School, making it possible then to turn Lower King's Road between the roundabout and the traffic lights into a pedestrian precinct.

What is new? The County Council have submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment a County Structure Plan. We are informed that the only reference to the relief road occurs in the written statement accompanying it, and that this says that during the first five years (1981-86) the County Council will consider various proposals with which we are not here concerned, and in the longer term has in mind to consider certain' additional proposals including the Berkhamsted relief road. If this is so it looks as though residents in Castle Street, Ravens Lane, Holliday Street and George Street can be easy till 1986.

We have now heard that the Receiver has received a satisfactory offer for the whole of the King's Arms but that he will pass on our enquiry to the new purchaser. When and if we hear more we'll let you know but in the meantime we'll be glad to hear your views. Could better use be made of the King's Hall if it were owned by the community rather than by the King's Arms? Or are the present arrangements adequate for those organisations who want to use the hall?

Incidentally Roger Cork's father, Kenneth Cork, is a governor of Berkhamsted School and Berkhamsted School for Girls - it's a small world!

The Town Hall

The Town Hall saga, like the building itself is still with us. Whatever one's views are on this most are agreed on the need for a positive approach and action - one way or another. Representatives of the Charity Commission visited Berkhamsted a few weeks ago and met delegates from interested organisations including, of course, the Citizens' Association. It was a long and useful meeting and we believe that the representatives were impressed by what they heard and saw (they visited the Town Hall in daylight this time) and by the obvious strength of feeling expressed. The next step is for them to report back to the Commissioners after which they will decide on further action. We all hope that this process will not take too long. Meanwhile you may be assured that we shall keep in touch with all the organisations and press the Commissioners in due course for a decision.

Mind Your Car

The Hertfordshire Constabulary are participating in a campaign, organised by the Home Office, to advise the motorist that by taking simple precautions he can deter all but the most determined thief and safeguard his car.

Research has shown that:

- a) most car thefts are the work of amateurs
- b) teenagers are responsible for most detected car thefts
- c) three out of four of the cars stolen were more than five years old, were in the medium price range and were taken from residential streets
- d) the most vulnerable times were after 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and
- e) most of the stolen cars were not properly secured.

Members of the Association have already participated in the campaign by placing leaflets on the windscreens of cars in car parks in Berkhamsted. During the period from 3rd to 15th January 1977 it is proposed that posters be displayed at strategic points in the town, and that the Police Caravan will be available for an exhibition of safety devices.

The slogan for the campaign is "Lock it or lose it". During the three years from 1972 thefts unauthorised taking of vehicles and thefts from vehicles increased by 27%. Existing records suggest that it is probable that during the last three months of the year more than 100 vehicles will be stolen in the Dacorum

Your Views, Please

Housing: Well, what about housing, you might ask. What is it to do with me? I'm all right where I am.

But what if you want to move to a larger house or a smaller one? What if your sons or daughters, nephews or nieces want to find a place to rent? How about somewhere convenient at hand for grandparents? What about accommodation for local teachers who help to educate your children? How do Dacorum District Council's plans for more (or no more) council housing affect you as a rate payer? What about a policy of selling council houses? Who is likely to live in the new developments under way - off Shootersway Kings Road/Charles Street, by Water Lane car park - and is this the right kind of development in the right place for Berkhamsted needs? And can the services and amenities in the town cope with this increased population? Where can the homeless go for help - and a roof over their heads? (Are there any homeless in Berkhamsted?)

We shall be looking at these and other questions in future newsletters. We hope at least you will be provoked into thinking, if not to the point of writing to let us know what you think.

This and That

We should like to thank all those who took the trouble to write to us as a result of the plea in the last newsletter. We very much appreciate your comments and criticism - hopefully it will all help to make your newsletter more to your liking.

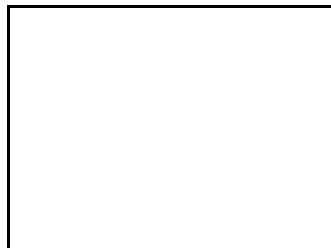
The news about a possible redevelopment of Luton Airport sounds (sorry!) ominous. We shall be watching this closely in liaison with LADACAN which does an excellent job on behalf of all of us.

New Year's Day Ramble - Monday, 3rd January 1977

Meet at Station car park at 10.30 a.m. Walk via Ashridge to the Bridge-water Arms for refreshments.

Subscriptions

May we thank all those of you who responded so well to the reminder in our last newsletter. There are, however, still a few subscriptions for 1970 to come and we do hope that those who have not yet been able to let us have theirs will not mind being reminded again. If there is a cross in the box below it means we have no record of your payment.



Our Treasurer, Stuart Rosser, will be pleased to have your payments at Lloyds Bank, in the High Street.