



September 1981

Autumn Splendours - Outdoors

By the time you read this, we should be into the red and yellow tints at Frithsden, Ashridge and the Hockeridges. Many trees around the town are also particularly worth a two minute pause to observe their Autumn splendour. You can see some of the local glory by joining us on our Autumn Ramble - Sunday 10 October - 10.30 am at Berkhamsted Station. This walk will take us into somewhat unfamiliar country around Cholesbury Common. As usual the overall length will be planned to get us back into Berkhamsted no later than 3.30 pm. We will try to arrange a 'stop' at a pub - but please bring your own sandwiches as often food at pubs on Sundays is not available.

- and Indoors

To compensate for shorter days, there are many attractions to suit nearly all tastes. The primary attraction is of course our own programme -

Tuesday 29 September	Civic Centre	8pm	'Collecting Wedgewood Ware' - a talk by Mr P. Latham
Sunday 18 October	Civic Centre	8pm	Autumn Ramble - meet at station at 10.30 am
Thursday 22 October	Civic Centre	8pm	'Britain and the European Community' - a talk by our Euro-M.P. Mr P. Beazley
Wednesday 25 November	Civic Centre	8pm	'The Amazon Basin' - a talk by Mr P.J. Leigh
Thursday 17 December	Victoria School	8pm	Christmas Social evening with Carols

There are also some interesting events at Hemel Hempstead, both in the Pavilion and at the Old Town Hall. Full details are given in leaflets available at the Berkhamsted Civic Centre and the Library. The Arts Trust are providing their 21st Anniversary Festival between 10 October and 1 November. In a varied programme of events are:-

October

10-30	Dacorum College Art Exhibition
11-17	6 nights of classic movies (Rex Cinema)
13	Julie Felix
16	Philharmonic Orchestra
21	Canterbury Tales
23	Midsummer Night's Dream - Ballet
26	George Shearing - Jazz Pianist

November

1	Brighthouse and Rastrick Brass Band
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Rummage and Bric-a-brac Sale

Please contribute to the Association's sale on Saturday 17 October at 10-12 at Gable Hall. We all have things lying around which are intended for an eventual 'clear out'. Please help us by reviewing your old ornaments, books, clothes, plants or etceteras. We will collect if you will phone Norman Binks on B. 6300, Charles Parker - 5933, Peter Braybrooke - 4955, Sheila Walton - 5988 or Hilary Talbot-Ponsonby - 5882 or drop it in (preferably in a bag or a box) at Potters Pride, 266 High Street, opposite Cowper Road and the Almshouses.

The proceeds will go towards our Tree Fund.

The Town Hall Trust have a number of events soon

Saturday 26 September - Coffee morning
Sunday 27 September - Town Hall 'Open Morning'
Saturday 21 November - Christmas Fayre at Civic Centre and Gable Hall
from 9.30am to 3.30pm

The activities of most local societies are of course given in the Library in Kings Road.

Tree Planting

This is now near to action time.

In 'country' areas, specifically Bridgewater School, the County Tree Bank will supply saplings. We have obtained the services of a specialist to guide us on planting and we are contacting other voluntary groups in the town to provide physical help. Please give us 2 hours of your time at weekends and if interested phone Tony Hutchinson on Berk. 4440 or Miranda Cummins on Berk. 6075.

Leisure Services Strategy

A Draft Consultation Document has been published (28 August 1981) following the original document and discussions of April. It was discussed on 7 September by Berkhamsted Consultative Group and presented on 17 September to the Leisure Services Committee whose views are not known publicly because discussion was held in closed session. It is understood that there will be further Public Consultation at a date unspecified. The Consultative Group is that called together in April comprising representatives of various groups in the town, eg. schools, Rotary, Cricket, Football, Tennis Clubs, Swimming Assoc., Citizens' Assoc. It is by no means a full cross-section and the 7 September meeting clashed with the opening of the Autumn Term which prevented many schools sending representatives. We are therefore writing to the committee Chairman and the Director of Leisure Services to say how much more thorough we feel consultation should be. We are also sending a synopsis of the Consultative Document to the 40 or so groups whom we contacted in October 1980, on this subject.

The Document describes the existing facilities, characteristics and needs of Berkhamsted against national standards, costs some options and gives some recommendations for the Committee's consideration.

The facilities required are given, in no particular precedence, as:-

- a) Public indoor swimming pool
- b) Public sports hall and squash courts
- c) Public park / open space for informal recreation near to Town Centre.
- d) Public Bowling Green
- e) upgrading of children's playgrounds incorporating modern safety standards.

The options costed are :-

1. Covering the existing open air pool and linking a new sports hall to it.
2. Building a new indoor pool and linking a new sports hall to it.
3. Modifying Ashlyns School indoor pool and subsequently extending it to include a sports hall.

The costs have to be taken on face value but seem higher than necessary (according to some professional judgements) and because of this may change. The costs range from £0.6 million through to £1.5 million depending on which group of modules one takes.

The recommendations are:-

1. It is considered by the Officers that Option 3 - the Ashlyns School Joint Provision Scheme - will in the long term give the best return on capital investment and produce what could be seen as an acceptable level of revenue deficit funding.
2. That the Officers be given authority to finalise negotiations as a matter of urgency with Hertfordshire County Council as outlined in Option 3 - the Ashlyns School Joint Provision Scheme.
3. The development of the Canal Field site as a public open space and outdoor leisure area should be agreed.
4. Consideration be given to the retention of the Outdoor Pool presently sited at Canal Field until such time as finances are made available and the work has been completed to provide a Joint Provision Pool at Ashlyns School.
5. Finances for Phase 2 of the Joint Provision Scheme at Ashlyns School should be provided at the earliest possible opportunity to enable work to proceed as a continuation of Phase 1.

Your Committee have held special meetings on this subject and have concluded that the Ashlyns dual use scheme gives the best chance of providing the Town with better facilities, provided that the open air pool is left in use at least until facilities are usable at Ashlyns. It must be a fundamental principle of any leisure services strategy that any proposed new facilities actually exist and can be tested, before existing ones are even considered for alteration. Whilst the swimming facilities are not the sole facility required, they are the major one and the costliest. Nevertheless, as a facility catering for relatively high and wide use (as opposed to other sports catering for specialist or particular age group needs) it is a facility which Berkhamsted should be provided with, year round, and to 1990 standards.

This subject will remain high on our list of priorities until a satisfactory conclusion is reached. There are many obstacles to achievement but given a united voice, the Town should demand and be given a fairer allocation of resources, to overcome the neglect of years past - some of which is due to decisions made before the Dacorum District Council existed. Because of the importance of this matter - it will govern Leisure Service facilities for the next 20-30 years, - please do not hesitate to give your views directly by phone or letter to the Chairman, or Secretary or any committee member known to you. Your views and ideas will be extremely welcome.

Swimming Pool

The Swimming Association believe that the open air pool should not be covered but should be left as a Dacorum open air pool for use by Tring, Hemel and Berkhamsted. There is evidence that some people from Tring and Hemel have used the open air pool this summer.

The use of the pool has been much greater than budgeted and better than many previous years. There have been 31,000 attendances providing £8,700. The budgetary provision was £3950 for 12 weeks. This was during an average summer ie. the earlier weeks were poor and the later ones had much better weather. Support by the schools and galas was not as normal due to doubt about its opening. So an even better performance can be expected with adequate planning and marketing. The staff at the pool have been great and the pool has been splendidly clear and warm. We have written to

Sharon Clough, the Supervisor, to thank her and the staff for all their good work.

Swimming Tuition

Lessons are provided at Ashlyns under the Dacorum evening classes programme. In addition the Swimming Association's 'Junior Swimming Club' are organising lessons at Ashlyns. Details available from James Spooner on Berk. 75351. The Swimming Association are holding a meeting in the Dining-Room at Ashlyns on Monday 19 October at 8 pm. Swimming will follow for one hour.

Much credit for developing swimming activities and helping to keep the Pool open, must go to the Swimming Association's Chairman and Committee. The Citizens' Association have been associated with them throughout and have given advice and support. Now that they are well established we hope they will go from strength to strength. Anyone interested as active member or moral supporter should contact Peter White, 68 Cross Oak Road, Berk. 6223.

Dacorum District Plan and Public Local Enquiry

The District Plan for the next five years is part of the overall strategic Plan for the South-East and is designed to be compatible with the Herts. County Structure Plan.

The objectives of the Plan which were supported by the Citizens' Association are:-

1. To reduce urban pressures in the countryside by resisting development associated with the 'spiral growth'.
2. To conserve the open countryside and areas of outstanding natural beauty.
3. To conserve and where possible enhance the existing townscape and landscape qualities of the District, including sites of archaeological importance and buildings of architectural and historical interest.
4. To allocate sufficient land for industrial, commercial and residential use and indicate a rate of development compatible with the policies contained in the Herts. County Structure Plan.
5. To make provision for a transport system to serve the needs of the District.
6. To make sufficient provision for 'leisure facilities.'

A public local enquiry was held in July for a Department of the Environment Inspector to hear any objections and support for the Plan.

Kitchener's Field and Lower Kings Road Sports Ground

The Berkhamsted Sports Association have asked for the boundary line of the amenity corridor to be moved west of the line along the footpath which runs north from the bottom of Castle Hill, to allow for two cricket pitches, a pavilion, car park and approach road to be built on the area.

The Dacorum District Council Planning officers were against this proposal as were local residents and the Citizens' Association; Why?

The Berkhamsted Cricket Club have a permanent cricket field in Canal Field off Lower Kings Road, part of which overlaps the football field.

Whilst sympathising with the aim to have two pitches on one site, many district planning principles as given in the District Plan were swept aside at a stroke earlier this year when planning permission was granted for flats to be built on part of the Cricket Club's pitch at Canal Field - the Club needing to sell this for development to finance a new site.

We believe that in allowing planning consent for the land at Lower Kings Road, the Development Control Committee have allowed the start of encroachment on to Leisure Amenity area and provided a precedent which could so easily be followed. The result will be the gradual loss - over 10 - 15 years, of the sports area and Canal Field area which is a lung to

Berkhamsted. Similarly, if Kitchener's Field has another pavilion built upon it, it will be an undeniable temptation to produce a Phase 2 with more build up on Canal Field and decanting on to Kitchener's Field. The Environment belongs to us all, and therefore, because it is a scarce resource, there will be conflicts over demand on use of land. We support the Dacorum District Plan because, if adhered to, it offers the best chance of laying down principles by which these conflicts can be resolved. The plan must have some integrity - which means that where clear planning policies are given and designated areas specified, then these must not be over-ridden.

The boundary of the Amenity Corridor at Kitchener's Field is an example of a planning principle. This is already in itself a compromise because of the existence of Cooper's Recreation Club. The original Amenity Corridor line being at New Road. The planners have brought the line away from New Road to recognise a de facto situation. This compromise is now being used as an argument for a further extension.

The Citizens' Association supported the proposed line of the Amenity Corridor in the District Plan because to change it would: -

1. Seriously threaten the area - pressure for future development might easily result in other development over the whole of Kitchener's Field.
2. Spoil an area of outstanding natural beauty. We have already seen what an eyesore the present tennis courts are on the east side of this area. The proposal is not just for a small village cricket club but a complex for a large flourishing club.
3. Go against the policies set out in the District Plan and undermine it to such an extent as to make it valueless - just used when it suits planners to support their decisions.
4. Threaten the Amenity Corridor along Canal Field and open opportunity for future repetition.

An alternative site, available to the Cricket Club, at Shootersway, although adjacent to the proposed by-pass, would in the Citizens' Association's view, be a more satisfactory overall solution and would considerably improve that area.

This whole matter is now subject to a separate public enquiry to be conducted by the Department of the Environment. A date will be announced very soon.

Berkhamsted Common

Following objections from the Citizens' Association to the extension of the amenity corridor out to Brickkiln Cottage over part of the Common, Dacorum District Council agreed that the line should be re-drawn to follow the boundary of the existing golf course.

Berkhamsted Citizens' Association

Civic Award Nomination

Address of Property.....
Description of work.....
Nominated by.....Tel. no.....
Address.....

Berkhamsted Place

The Association supported Dacorum's proposal to draw the Green Belt along the south side of Bridgewater School playing fields and the Berkhamsted Place Woods so as to protect the skyline which had previously been threatened.

The developer, who had previously been given planning permission to build nine houses on the site of the old Berkhamsted Place, objected to the Green Belt being drawn over part of his land which will reduce the size of the development to six houses.

This is now the subject of a separate enquiry to be conducted by the Department of the Environment.

Enquiry Results

The Inspector is now to make his report on the District Plan to the Dacorum District Council before any final decisions are made.

St. Paul's Maternity Unit Hemel Hempstead

You will probably have heard about the proposed closure of the maternity unit at St. Paul's Hospital. Over the past 4 years a working party from the Regional Medical Committee has been studying the maternity services and its needs in the North-West Thames Regional Health Authority (of which Dacorum is part) and planning services for the future. Their report suggested that the maternity unit at St. Paul's be closed and patients transferred to Shrodells Hospital at Watford. A small ante-natal Clinic would remain at St. Paul's. No mention is made of the increase in local midwifery care or G.P.s being willing to accept home confinements.

We have written to the Community Health Council supporting their objections to these proposals, particularly with regard to the cost and inconvenience to families of the distance involved in visiting patients and the safety factor in that the extra distance by car or ambulance could prejudice the life of mother and / or child. The traffic flows at certain times of the day make a hospital 'dash' a very hazardous activity. At its meeting on 16 September the Area Health Authority agreed to recommend that the maternity services should be kept open and remain as they are at present including the special care facilities and the report now comes up for discussion by the Regional Health Authority at a date as yet unknown.

Civic Award Scheme

As in 1980 we are again, presenting an annual award to encourage and stimulate interest in the local environment. We hope that during the year you have kept a look-out for suitable nominations for the 1981 award and with that in mind a form is provided above which we ask you to complete.

The type of work eligible must be in Berkhamsted or Northchurch and must have been completed during the past year. It may be a new building, extension, renovation or landscaping, large or small, anything from a building complex to a garden. The main criterion is that it must in some way contribute an enhancement to the area. Please send your nomination to our Secretary Sheila Walton, 11 Murray Road by 1 December or telephone her on 5988 and she will take details. The Award will be presented at the AGM on 11 February.