



**Berkhamsted  
Citizens  
Association**

# NEWSLETTER

September 1982

## 1. Local Colour - Ramblers' style

Last September's Newsletter opened by reference to the red and yellow colour of the countryside expected in the weeks of late September through early October. Frithsden, Ashridge and Hockeridge Woods are ready again to give us a display of their Autumn glory. Lucky are we in Berkhamsted to have such a display on our doorstep. Hopefully there are no residents who cannot find time to sample the walks around the local footpaths through woods and Common. To help with this we have been, and will include a walk in our Newsletters (except this one!). The Autumn Ramble on Sunday 17 October will prove adequate substitute. Meet at the station at 10.00am, half an hour earlier than usual in order to achieve a longer morning sector, as some members have asked for. Our route will take us to Cholesbury and Hawridge Common, with a lunch time break at the Full Moon, Cholesbury. As usual all people (members or not) are welcome for either morning or afternoon sector, or both. The afternoon walk starts at approx. 1,30pm.

## 2. Local Colour - Official style

The long awaited Official Guide to Berkhamsted is now available FREE from the Civic Centre. Due to a misunderstanding between the publisher's and the management of W.H. Smith, the latter were selling the guide for 45p for a short period, but this mistake has been rectified. The guide whilst well produced as a document, contains several errors and omissions. The Leisure Services Committee of the Town Council have set up a 'working group' to oversee the next edition and collect such errors, omissions and suggested improvements. These should therefore be sent to Mrs S. Robinson, Town Clerk at Berkhamsted Civic Centre.

## 3. Local Colour through Misunderstanding

The BCA has been mentioned in two issues in the local press recently due largely to some misunderstanding and misquotation. This is regretted and steps have been taken to remedy the matter so far as possible with the people concerned.

a) Golf Club - The first item centres on the BCA's observations on the Dacorum District Plan in relation to the line of the 'Amenity Corridor'. The area of this as a planning concept, provides for facilities and buildings to be built (subject to specific planning permission) within the Corridor. Areas outside the Corridor are designated as not open to development. These designations of areas are planning concepts in order to provide a broad framework within which to judge specific applications for planning permission. The line of the Amenity Corridor is therefore important in providing an initial argument for or against any specific applications.

Our submission contained a) comments on the line of the Amenity Corridor at Kitcheners Field to defend this area from development;

b) comments on the Amenity line across the Common to defend this area also from inappropriate development;

It also contained comments on the Green Belt as applied to Berkhamsted Place where we perceived it important to protect the trees and associated skyline.

None of the landowners of the these three areas were specifically advised of our comments as it has never over many years been our practice to do so. Nor does the planning procedure require us to do so. Normally the Authority receiving submissions does this as they feel appropriate in the circumstances. The Department of the Environment, for example, in their documents requesting comments on the Bypass specifically say that comments will be passed to any other parties directly affected. This is a well known and understood principle. The Golf Club have indicated concern that we have made our comments on the line of the Amenity Corridor which they perceive to be to their detriment in any possible creation of a second course. Being outside the line of the Amenity Corridor, an application for a second course will have to substantiate grounds for being an exception to the normal criteria for non-development. This does not however prevent a second course but does mean that an application would be most likely subject to special scrutiny - as was the Sports Association application for two cricket pitches and club building on Kitcheners Field where eventually outline permission was granted in favour of the Cricket Club.

b) Bypass - Following the public presentation by the Department of the Environment at the Civic Centre on 20-21 May and 5 June, a letter supporting the outer (preferred) route was sent to the Department. Copies were also sent to Nick Lyell M.P., Hilary Rost, our County Councillor, Dacorum District Council and the Gazette and the Mail. The important extract is:-

"We are in favour of the Preferred Route because:

a) it provides a link direct with the A41M at Tring;

b) a link at Dudswell (Alternative Route) commits traffic to an existing notorious accident blackspot, ie. the section between Dudswell and Pendley Beeches;

c) the line of the Published Route blends into the local topography thus giving a natural barrier to road noise and avoiding any visual scar across the valley side as would be provided by the alternative route.

We believe the Berkhamsted Bypass should be started no later than 1985 and if possible without a further public inquiry which would most likely recommend the proposed route and therefore only serve to delay construction and increase costs. The urgent need is for a bypass to relieve the congestion in this valley town."

The Mail published much of the letter but omitted the words "if possible" prior to "Public inquiry". You may have seen a letter in the Gazette indicating concern that the BCA was asking for no public inquiry on the bypass. This is not the case. There has however already been a public inquiry, in 1971, and recently the presentations in May and June 1982, which gave the public an opportunity to air views. If there is sufficient weight of opinion against (the preferred route) of course the Department should hold a public inquiry.

As public inquiries cost public (and private) money and as there already has been plenty of information and discussion, any further public inquiry could possibly be regarded as unnecessary and / or used by the Department of Environment as a basis for postponing or cancelling the bypass. Councillor Hilary Rost has already publicly voiced such anxiety. The officials at the presentation in May and June indicated that a public inquiry could be necessary - depending on the pattern and weight of comments on the 'Preferred Route' and the 'Route of nearly equal merit'. As only they have the overview of all comments, only they can judge the basis for or against a public inquiry. That is why the words "if possible without further public inquiry" were in the letter. If issues arise which deserve and justify Public inquiry - on the implications of each route and relative impact - then of course there should be one. So the Association certainly has not changed its view and role to inform members, and encourage open public debate on issues of local concern.

#### 4. Positive, Negative and Neutral

The above issues, the Swimming Pool / Leisure Services debate, Kitcheners Field and other local developments are all matters which have current and longer term implications for the area. The Association exists "to undertake work for the benefit of the Community when this can more easily be done by a 'voluntary association' and "in helping to develop the social civic life of the town" our constitution gives four special aims ie.

- a) to stimulate the interests of the inhabitants in local public affairs and and to provide the sentiment of local patriotism.
- b) to work for the preservation of objects of historical interest or of natural beauty.
- c) to provide opportunity for discussion on all matters of local public interest.
- d) to initiate and assist useful measures in the public service.

In this the Association, through the action of its officers and committee, seeks to maintain objectivity and take into account all interests and aspects affecting the well being of the town as a whole. This does not mean we should be neutral. It is not possible to please all of the people all of the time. The main criterion is what is to be the overall benefit rather than those of a particular sector, both in the short as well as long term. Most members we believe, have supported a positive constructive stance by the Association. Letters and messages to the Chairman and committee support this rather than a passive role. It will also maintain its 'neutral' role of providing information to members and other people on issues of public concern.

#### 5. Tree Planting Scheme - Town Area

The Paper giving details of suggested improvements through tree-planting in the Town area has been accepted by the Town Council and by Dacorum District Council. Stage by stage this will be implemented provided adequate funds are forthcoming from Town and Dacorum Councils. Meanwhile we have our own Tree Fund to which was recently added £50 from Waitrose Limited, whom we have thanked for their generosity.

Members can help tree planting in the area of town or country by collecting seeds, conkers, acorns etc. and planting these in the hedgerows and paths - in a suitable location that won't be inconvenient to passer-by,

Alternatively saplings, (Initially grown in one's own garden) can be transplanted.

The National Tree Council has chosen the theme 'For every child a Tree' for the 8th National Tree Week 20-27 November 1982. In relation to this Dacorum Council have instigated a scheme for planting an avenue of oak trees in Gadebridge Park. It is not clear at present if DDC schemes will flourish in other parts of Dacorum. We hope that a similar scheme can apply in Berkhamsted. Members will know that we already have a well advanced scheme for tree planting at Bridgewater School - with trees from the County Tree Bank. Offers of help with tree planting will be welcomed. Please phone Tony Hutchinson on B. 4440.

#### 6. Activities

Following the Autumn Ramble on 17 October, the next meeting will be a talk by Mr A. Campbell CMG, Ex-General Secretary of the Chiltern Society on 'Conservation or Change'. This will be on Wednesday 20 October at 8pm at the Court House.

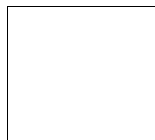
On Tuesday 23 November Mrs P.S. Cunningham will talk on 'Around the World in an English Garden' again at the Court House at 8pm.

#### 7. Civic Award Scheme

Once again we are presenting an award to encourage and stimulate interest in the local environment. 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 now in writing to our Secretary Sheila Walton, 11 Murray Rd, Berkhamsted and before 1 December 1982. All nominations are judged against specified criteria by a panel of members of the Town Amenities sub-committee. The Award is a 14 inch ceramic plaque, suitably inscribed plus certificates for 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The Award will be presented at the AGM in February.

#### 8. From the Membership Secretary

I am sorry that I have to bring this subject up again but out of 425 members there are still 86 of you who would appear, from my records, not to have paid any subscription for 1982 (£1.50 a family or £1 a single person). If there is a cross in the box I am afraid you are one of them.



I would be very grateful if you could help me get my books straight by either paying into Lloyds Bank, or to your newsletter deliverer, or to me, whichever is most convenient. Or else, if you no longer wish to belong, please let me know.

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