



**Berkhamsted
Citizens
Association**

NEWSLETTER

November 1984

Some days you win

1. The events and activities programme each year has covered a remarkably varied range of subjects. The program is a tradition and the Association's contribution to the social / cultural life of the Town. The support it gets is also remarkably diverse and unpredictable. Some events have had satisfyingly large audiences, others the reverse. We just have to take it in our stride and try, difficult as it is, to maintain the variety and calibre of speakers. It is the same with the rambles - always a feature of our annual programme with New Year, Easter and Autumn being the occasions for an organised potter round a different corner of our countryside. The Autumn Ramble is nearly always the best because of the colours in the trees. Three weekends before and one weekend after the 'Sunday of our Ramble', were each sunny and warm. On the day, however, it rained. You can't win them all!

2. But don't miss this

The talk by Richard Page M.P. was well attended and an interesting evening, with lots of questions. Our thanks have been Given to Richard for giving us his time, particularly on a Friday evening of a precious weekend,

Our next event promises to be equally but differently interesting. Mr Charles Driver - Headmaster of Berkhamsted School will talk on 'Justifying the Future' on Thursday 29 November at 8pm at the Sessions Hall.

Friday 14 December at 8pm at the Sessions Hall is the date and time of our winter social gathering - to sing carols and sip a glass of wine (or two) together with Mince pies. This is always a comfortably, relaxed evening usually with a choir to help our voices and tuning - so do note this in your diaries.

The Ramble on New Year's Day is to the Bridgewater Arms at Little Gaddesden, leaving the station at 10.30am.

Our first speaker for the New Year is Mr Brian Barton of Tring who will talk on 'The Natural History of An Old Canal' - The Aylesbury Arm. This will include, wildlife, plants etc, and will talk place at the Sessions Hall on Wednesday 23 January at 8pm.

3. A Friend Indeed

All her many friends have been shocked and saddened to know of the death of Mary Yates, after a sudden illness. Mary was a long-standing friend of the Association, invariably enjoying with us our Sunday Rambles. She was also a committee member and our representative on the Berkhamsted Arts Trust and the Beaune Society. She had many friends through her other interests and links in the town and all will feel this loss.

4. Wish you had known?

No-one could reasonably complain that there is not enough to interest them in this area of West Herts. We referred in the last newsletter to choice, particularly in regard to the local countryside. Indoors we have the activities of many societies, the Adult Education programme and that of the Arts Trust. As 'something on the rates' the latter cannot, be beaten. The events at the Old Town Hall, Hemel Hempstead, the Pavilion and, occasionally, at the Civic Centre, Berkhamsted, are well worth keeping an eye on. Surely something for all tastes.

The recent Festival of Dance has provided the Northern Ballet Theatre and Orchestra, Russian Dancers from the Ukraine, local dancing schools, Winnie the Pooh to music and movement and the Stutz Bear Cats, a modern song and dance group. On 4 and 5 December, Jill Freud and Company present Pickwick Papers. Brass Band lovers have had Brass Wingates, Fodens and the RAF Central Band. All these events are available at reasonable prices as subsidies are provided by many local and national firms, the Eastern Arts Association and Dacorum Leisure Services. Taunton Cider Company are assisting with Pickwick Papers - no wonder it is billed as 'a wavy comical misadventure', Lada Cars, Lloyds Bank, Marks and Spencers and the Fenland District Council are also clipping in - what strange bedfellows. The Russians come to test the stage in Berkhamsted on November 19th. Good job it is not the usual massed armies but a 'select company of ten versatile artists'.

So how do you get to know of the Spring programme? Well, the Library normally has leaflets and so does the Civic Centre - in the small room on the left immediately beyond the entrance swing doors. We badly need the entrance to be widened and opened-up - as planned - so publicity material can be more easily displayed. But you can get on the Mailing List. For inclusion on this, for Dacorum Leisure Services Arts and Entertainment Information, telephone Hemel 64451. Berkhamsted Civic Centre (2441) also will provide information and the box office will book tickets using Access. Bookings open for events usually about three weeks in advance.

Another local culture spot is Pendley Manor where the new owners Grassroots Partnership Ltd. are developing a very varied and interesting programme. For mailing list phone Tring 6674 or 2483.

5. Local Publicity

Berkhamsted Arts Trust is a local coordinating body with an Executive Committee made up of representatives from some 18 local organisations. One of its endeavours is the distribution of details of the forthcoming events of one member's organisation amongst members of the rest. Provided hand-outs can be available in sufficient time to cope with distribution at the member organisations own meetings, then this can be helpful. This method obviously is only supplementary to posters and circulars to people but provides a useful cross fertilisation. The Secretary of the Berkhamsted Arts Trust is Jeff Edwards, Amberly, Graemesdyke Road, Berkhamsted. If in doubt, try the Library or the main poster points.

6. Message to Commuters

The other day our Secretary's husband arrived at Euston for the second evening running to find his fast train home to Berkhamsted had been cancelled. (The excuse this time was no driver) Normally, like most of his fellow commuters, he curses the vagaries of the train service and does nothing. But this time he and three other Berkhamstedians decided they had had enough! The area Manager's office was assailed with a demand that the next inter-city express be stopped additionally at Berkhamsted. After a slight altercation with the Area Manager's staff, who were somewhat taken aback to find a posse of petulant commuters in their offices, British Rail gave way. The Manchester express duly halted at Berkhamsted, where the four complainants alighted. But what, you might ask, about all the other Berkhamstedian passengers? Well, BR decided not to tell them about the additional stop!

So the message to you commuters is quite clear - you pay £1,000 a year for your ticket and if you make sufficient fuss, you might just find BR occasionally takes some notice.

7. Trust the Connection

From comments received from many sources, we believe that many people do not understand the link between the Town Hall and the Saturday Market along the High Street. The link lies in Trust Deeds which provide for the net income from the Market Fund to go towards repair and upkeep of the Market Hall which is the main entrance to the Town hall. The Market Fund gets its income from the rents charged for the stalls along the High Street. The net income is that left after all costs - mainly for clearing up the pavement and roadway - have been met. The Market Fund and Town Hall have been for many years run by the Trustees and in latter years up to 1979 the Town Councillors acted (ex officio) as Trustees for both. After 1979 the Town Councillors ceased to have responsibility for the Town Hall which was then run by elected Trustees and Trustees coming from representative bodies within the Town. The link with the Market Fund (run by the Town Council Trustees) remains however, and the management of this Fund to maximise income and minimise expenses is highly significant to providing a useful sum for the Town Hall. When the public are supporting the Town Hall by street collections and events like the Autumn Fair, the benefits arising from the Market Fund should not be lost. The last two years

contribution has been £1725 and £2496. The Trustees (the Town Council) have now taken action to reduce costs and this should help a lot bringing contributions to a planned £3879. They have promised to look soon at increasing the rents which are currently £6 for an 8by4 foot stall. Tring (Wednesday market) charge slightly less and Hemel Saturday Market charges are £7.50. Others such as Aylesbury, St. Albans and Maidenhead charge more but in some cases provide better facilities. It is clear that a bigger contribution to the Town Hall could come from the Market if it was decided to do so. The Trustees are moving in this direction.

8. In It Together

Last month's reference to objectives seems to have caused perplexions (not apoplexy!) in some quarters. We all know that power to do something lies outside the Town Council and often with Dacorum. Some of the points suggested lie with Herts County Council and even Government Departments. But issues have to be pursued sometimes over months and years. Contacts have to be made and discussion /persuasion has to be encouraged. Unless there are some agreed objectives, there is no clear purpose to Council activity at whatever level. Unless Berkhamsted people through their councillors are involved and, indeed, direct debate and decision, this will go to people and localities who are prepared to do this. When we vote for Councillors it is on the assumption that individuals, groups and parties have a role to play in looking after our communities interests, at all levels ie. allocations (of money) as well as allotments. If the Council has no will or instinct to do this, what is it there for? This line of reasoning is not political, but objective and apolitical; because we are suggesting that all people in Berkhamsted and District do have an interest in how the town develops or is neglected. We have no right to grumble if we do not do anything to influence events.

9. Leisure – If You Can

One of the major interests of the BCA over many years (and going back to the 1920's) has been the available leisure activities in the Town and the allocation of resources to improve them. A new Leisure Strategy Document has just been published by Dacorum Borough Council and is to be applauded. At least it discusses the subject openly and provides for options and objectives. It is also a public discussion document and deserves wide publicity. It supports as a priority development of Ashlyns School facilities on a dual use (School and Public) basis. We will prepare a detailed explanation in our January newsletter. The Citizens Association is one of several bodies to have been issued with the full strategy document. Summary documents are available from the Civic Centre, Berkhamsted. The results of consultation are to be reported back to a future meeting of the Leisure Services Committee.

We hope it is not too early to wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We apologise for the poor quality typing due to problems with the correction fluid!