



**Berkhamsted
Citizens
Association**

NEWSLETTER

November 1989

Christmas is coming ...

We look forward to seeing you on Friday 15th December at 8.00 p.m. on the occasion of the Citizens' Carols evening. The Old Hall at Berkhamsted School provides exactly the right setting for the singing of members of the Berkhamsted Choral Society, for the voices of the Smurthwaite's as they entertain us with seasonal readings, and for the sipping of liquid refreshment and the nibbling of mince pies!

It's time to enter for the Citizens' Environment Award

This year is the ninth since the Environment Award scheme was introduced in 1981 and we again anticipate a good number of entries. Nominations can be made to any member of the Committee up to and including Saturday 6th January 1990. We have already received one entry. Adjudication will take place in February and the results will be announced at the A.G.M. on 22nd March.

It's also time to pay up ...

You may find you've forgotten to pay your subscription for 1989. You may want to get ahead by paying for your 1990 membership. Whichever it is you are in the good company of the other 535 Berkhamsted Citizen household members. Our membership secretary reports that 40% of households are now paying 5-year subscriptions. So much easier!

If your friends would like to join, application forms are always available in the library and the Civic Centre. A Berkhamsted Citizens' membership is just the gift for the person who has everything.

The work goes on

Listed buildings - The last newsletter referred to our interest in further work being done on conservation studies in the town and it was particularly refreshing when your Committee recently received an approach from one of our well-known members, Councillor David Sherratt, suggesting a combined approach to the identification of buildings that are worthy of grade listing. We are now getting this under way and anyone who knows of candidate buildings is asked to notify a member of the the Committee.

Daffodil Bulbs - The Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust has again this year been generous in giving us 600 February Gold bulbs which over two weekends in October were planted in Berkhamsted castle grounds by volunteer members. This year we have concentrated them in the southern area of the grounds. The ground was extremely dry at the time of planting, which was helpful.

A revised Bourne Centre scheme - We understand that discussions between the developers and the Borough Council are continuing and that a formal application could be lodged before the end of the year. It seems likely that this will include the same number of car parking spaces and shops as the original scheme, but the scheme will not include a covered mall.

Ravens Lane canal bridge - a design competition opportunity- Two of the strong entries for last year's Environment Award were developments on both sides of the canal just downstream of the Ravens Lane bridge (the Boat inn and Ravens Wharf housing) and this stretch of the canal is now greatly improved. For some time, the Committee has been contemplating further enhancement of this area by featuring a mural on the town side abutment of this bridge. This brick abutment is seen from the towpath on the other side of the canal and from the canal itself.

Without commitment to proceeding with the mural itself, it has been decided to proceed with a competition for a suitable mural design with a first prize of £100. The competition is open to anyone who has connections with the town and full details will be made available early in the new year, with results given at the A.G.M.

The British Waterways Board and other interested parties are being supportive in this venture, which we think is another constructive way of furthering improvement and awareness of our town environment. We will be publicising the competition through local papers and by a direct approach to local schools.

Planning legislation is changing

For many months, members of the Committee and the Town Amenities sub-committee have been pressing for action to alleviate the parking problems of Berkhamsted. The Association had written to Dacorum Borough Council pointing out the absurdity of the old rules applied to new developments. A new or converted office of about 5400 square feet can probably contain 33 people or so and the current rules only require about 13 car parking places. Adding just 10 square feet more actually can lead to two fewer places being required.

Dacorum are now in the process of developing a new Borough Plan and with it a set of Interim Parking Guidelines. These new guidelines are tighter (the above example would now require a much more realistic 20 places), and so should both reduce the pressure to build in unsuitable sites and reduce the spill-over of cars on to the public car parks and roads.

Perhaps Dacorum should now look at the discrepancy in the cost of all day parking at our 'shopping' car parks compared with the station.

The moment arrives for the Youth Club

At long last it seems that for the Berkhamsted Youth Club there is light at the end of the tunnel. Since being turned out of the Park View School site some six or seven years ago, to allow for an office development, the Youth Club has been homeless. It took some years of looking before the Dacorum Borough Council made a site available, after the efforts of Janet Dunbavand, at the bottom of Lagley Meadow. Unfortunately there were builders' access problems, which were complicated by the building of the new Sports Centre. The Dacorum Borough Council was not in a position to allow work to begin until plans for the Sports Centre were finalised. By using the same builder, it can now be built at the same time.

The developers of the Park View School site gave £20,000 to compensate for the displacement, which of course was not nearly enough to pay for a new building. This has now increased to nearly £40,000. The Hertfordshire County Council has promised another £47,000 if used before the end of this financial year, otherwise it may be lost. Berkhamsted Town Council have promised £10,000 and a further £10,000 has been raised by various means, including Rotary donations. (All figures are rounded) There is a shortfall of about £40,000 which will have to be found by the summer, either from donations, grants or interest-free loans, to complete the building.

At a meeting in early November with the Youth and Community officers, a Trustee and the Rotary representative on the Youth Club Management Committee, George Kite, the Town Mayor, June Crawley, Councillor Mrs Janet Dunbavand, the Leisure Services Officer, Mrs Mary Pedlow and others, the positive enthusiasm and determination was like a breath of fresh air. If this enthusiasm is also shown by the people of Berkhamsted, by August or September we should see the club house completely built.

It has been said by a certain councillor that with the opening of the Sports Centre there will be no need for a Youth Club. But the uses will be complementary not competitive. It will supply small friendly accommodation, a place to meet, to chat, to play games, and to develop interests in all sorts of cultural activities. Above all it will be a place that the young people of the town can call their own.

Hilary Talbot-Ponsonby, Trustee Berkhamsted Youth Club.

A change of scene for a past Chairman and Newsletter Editor of B.C.A.

Members may be interested to know that Norman and Audrey Binks are at present living in Dubai. Norman is working for United Arab Airlines and Audrey is teaching English in a primary school. Both jobs obviously have their challenges! Audrey reports that children as young as 3½ have different teachers for Science, Maths, Arabic and Religion during a 6-period day, 6.30 a.m. to 2.0 p.m. They carry a bag of books and a lunch box from which they eat crisps and chocolate constantly (except in Audrey's class, of course!) and fall asleep as they bounce home in the bus.

In Sh Alla (God being willing) Norman and Audrey will be back in the UK for a holiday at the end of January, early February.

Has the time come for you to consider a change?

We understand from Norman Williams, who has recently been appointed Chairman of the Management Committee of the Dacorum District Citizens Advice Bureau, that both the Bureau and the Citizens Advice Centre wish to recruit more volunteer advisers.

Academic qualifications are not a necessary requirement for good advisers. After training, advisers provide assistance in handling all kinds of problems from, the filling in of forms to the interpretation and application of complex legislation. They need to be sympathetic, tolerant and patient and it may help to relieve stress if they have a sense of humour.

If any member would be interested in this kind of volunteer work, he or she should contact the local Citizens Advice Bureau. There is an office in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring. The telephone number of the main office in Hemel Hempstead is 50635.

Celebrate the coming of the new decade

Meet other BCA members at the top of Cross Oak Road on Monday 1st January at 10.30 a.m. for the New Year Ramble. What way we will take only Keith Jenkins, our leader, knows. If you don't feel like walking, join us anyway at the Bull in Bellingdon - for lunch.

A very Happy Christmas to you from the BCA Chairman and Committee members.