



**Berkhamsted
Citizens
Association**

NEWSLETTER

November 1990

HOW MANY SHOPPING DAYS TO CHRISTMAS?

That depends on when you read this newsletter; too few, probably, if you have not yet started even to draw up your list. But.....

Christmas is coming

And we look forward to seeing you at 8.00 p.m. on Wednesday 19th December at the Citizens Carols Evening. The Old Hall of Berkhamsted School provides exactly the right setting for the singing of members of the Berkhamsted Choral Society, for the voices of the Smurthwaites entertaining us with seasonal readings and for the sipping of wine and the nibbling of mince pies. This party is for members and their friends: price £2.50 each.

Do join us, but reserve some breath for carols with a difference the following evening, Carols in Coats, in the cold in the main hall of the Town Hall at 8.00 p.m. on Thursday 20th December in aid of the Town Hall Appeal: glühwein, more mince pies and bring your torch.

Christmas is also the time to remember:-

Your subscription

No-one has forgotten to pay their subscription for 1990. I suspect that this is primarily because the reminders went out before last Christmas; congratulations, you are now in the good company of the other 544 household members. We have, therefore, decided to send out the 1991 renewal notices with this newsletter to those concerned. Some 45% of households are now paying 5-year subscriptions. So much easier for us and, perhaps, a hedge against inflation for you.

We now have almost nine hundred individual members so let us try to make the thousand next year. If your friends would like to join, application forms are always available in the library and Civic Centre. A Berkhamsted Citizens membership is just the gift for the person who has everything.

C. Talbot-Ponsonby

The Environment Award

This is the eleventh year of the award scheme and we again anticipate a good number of entries. Nominations may be made to any member of the Committee by Saturday 12th January. Adjudication will take place in February and the results will be announced at the A.G. M. on 20th March.

EVENTS PAST

Autumn Ramble

Some forty people very much enjoyed the Autumn Ramble on Sunday 14th October from the junction of Cross Oak Road and Shootersway In a far from straight line across the fields to the Greyhound at Wigginton. The sun shone, the autumn colours were at their best and it was warm enough to eat our pub lunch outside. Not everyone assayed the return journey on foot via the canal.

The Ashridge Estate

Some eighty people attended an illustrated talk in the Court House on 25th October about the Ashridge Estate, and particularly the storm damage in January this year, by Graeme Cannon, the warden. Several lessons were learned from the tragic event:- many of the trees which fell were old and should have been felled some time before to make way for new planting. There were areas in which unsuitable trees had been planted; they will not be replaced by the same species. In short, there was a need for more active management of the estate.

It was noticed that at the height of the storm, the deer congregated on the golf course! More interesting, perhaps, areas of new saplings are protected by fences in a circle: the deer walk round and round, like Pooh and Piglet. If the fences are in straight lines, the deer will jump over them.

The Association has made a donation of £100 towards the Appeal fund. If you wish to make a personal contribution, please send it to:-

Leslie Thompson,
Old Copse Lodge,
Toms Hill, Aldbury,
Tring, Herts.

EVENTS FUTURE

Market Stall: 8th December from 8.30am

We will be selling cakes, bric-a-brac, plants, old books (but not electrical goods or old clothes) in the market on Saturday 8th December, in aid of the Youth Club. Please bring your contributions to the stall itself outside Flatt & Mead or take them in advance to a Committee member.

On the same day you can support another deserving cause at the other end of the market, the Town Hall (see below).

New Year's Day Ramble

We meet at 10.30 a.m at the station to walk via the common and Ashridge to Aldbury. The local pub will be warned but you may prefer to bring your own sandwiches.

TOWN AMENITIES

One of the Association's main tasks is to keep a close eye on proposed developments and to comment upon them to the Town and Borough Councils in what seems to us the best interests of all our citizens. Sadly, the Town Council has no powers over planning and at times Dacorum Council seems remote and not too interested in the changing face of our town, not always to the good, many of us must surely think.

Planning Applications

At the time of writing, the future of the Kingsgate Centre, perhaps the most important proposal for years, is still unknown. There is to be yet another discussion by Dacorum's Development Control Committee on 28th November. Both your Committee and the Town Council have been as active as possible on this matter.

Also still in the melting pot are the future of the open air pool, the proposed demolition of the Goat public house and replacement by offices - the Town Council has already objected - Cooper's site on Berkhamsted Hill and the Wellcome site between Ravens Lane and Manor Street. On the latter, the major plan for offices has been refused but there is now an application to demolish some houses.

Our Town Amenities Sub Committee will continue its vigilance.

Bridgewater Road

The Council has received many letters of complaints from residents in Bridgewater Road about dangerous driving following the vast increase of traffic volume and speed in the past two years. Residents have accordingly been asked to record any accidents, when, where, time, weather conditions, state of road surface, type of vehicle and speed, and report to the police.

Keith Jenkins

BCA Representative on the Road and
Home Safety Advisory Committee

The Town Hall

An amenity more under our own control.

As has been well-publicised in the Gazette, our Town Mayor, David Sherratt, has set up a Committee of Friends with himself as Chairman and John Cook, Deputy Mayor, as Vice-Chairman. Two members of our Committee, Eric Drake and Peter Holt, are members of this new Committee. The aim is an appeal of £80,000 in two years to fund sufficient restoration of the main Assembly Hall to make it usable. If you are interested, attend the A.G.M. of the Town Hall Trust at 8.00 p.m. on Tuesday 27th November in the Sessions Hall.

Perhaps just as important, attend the "state" opening of the newly-restored staircase from the High Street, foyer and kitchen/bar area at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday 8th December, when you will be able to learn more about The Friends and all the ways in which you could help. And sing carols in the cold Assembly Hall on 20th December.

Our Police

An amenity of a different sort.

On 15th. October representatives of the Northchurch and Tring Councils and of your Committee were invited to a talk by Inspector Andrew Walsh on the "Ottawa System" of policing at the end of a Town Council meeting in the Civic Centre.

The working conditions of police officers are governed by the Police Regulations. These stipulate a four group, three shift system of eight hours each for seven consecutive days; fifty six hours between rest days over a twenty eight day roster. This system provides the same number of officers on duty at 6.00 a.m. as at public house closing times: there is little flexibility to cover peak times without overtime. The system is also contrary to the body's natural rhythms and leads to accumulated sleep deficit and disorientation of normal family and social life. (I know, I once worked it in a continuous process factory. Ed.)

In 1989 an alternative system was introduced in Ottawa, Canada, It is now being tested in Portsmouth and since 17th September in "D" Division of Hertfordshire, covering Berkhamsted, Northchurch and Tring, on a forty week experiment.

This system is based on a five shift, thirty five day roster, working hours varying from ten on day and evening shifts to 8½ to nine on nights. The advantages are greater flexibility, increased cover at peak times such as 14.00 - 17.00 and 22.00 - 03.00, without overtime and less disturbance to a normal life for the officers.

The introduction obviously had its problems, but Inspector Walsh was nevertheless convinced that this system would prove very beneficial. We will await with much interest the final assessment of the experiment towards the end of next year.

IN MERORIAM

You may have read recently in the Gazette of the death of Graham Tottle. He was an active co-opted member of the Activities Sub Committee and helped with our social events. Norman Williams attended his funeral on 6th November as the Committee's representative in recognition of our appreciation of his work with the B. C.A.

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And finally, a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 1991 from the BCA Chairman and Committee members.