



**Berkhamsted
Citizens
Association**

NEWSLETTER

September 1994

Editor's Musings

The year moves on and, as I have noticed for many years now, Septembers have the habit of cropping up round about now and when they do a Newsletter is due. So here we go.

The Association's main summer event was, of course, the Summer Wine party which was held this year at the National Film Archive. It was very well attended and greatly enjoyed by all who were present. Dr. and Mrs. Schou did us proud and we are very grateful for their hospitality.

Kingsgate, like the poor, is always with us. You will recall that (summarising) the Association is not necessarily opposed to the development providing that it is not of such a size that it would change the character of the town (ie. not a superstore) and that it should be carefully linked with the High Street to preserve a unified town centre. Association officers have been having private meetings with the various interested parties to ensure that our recommendations are taken into account at this fluid stage and before proposals become set in concrete. We have reached something of an impasse. While, so far as we can see, the proposed size would be reasonable for the town's needs, we have not been able to obtain any re-assurance on the other aspects within the present plan. Accordingly, the Association has written to the Chairman of the DBC Development Control Committee in the following terms:

"The BCA has inspected the amended planning scheme and is extremely disappointed that despite two years of constructive suggestion there has been no material improvement in the quality of the scheme, particularly with regard to the pedestrian access to the centre of the town."

Copies of the letter have been sent to the Chief Planning Officer and all the DBC councillors. The council really must understand that if a fair minded approach to the problem is expected then very real concerns should be taken into account. I would have thought the council themselves would wish this issue to be addressed. After all, one of their main arguments for the store development is that it will stop the drift away from, and consequently creeping destruction of, the town centre. To achieve this, access is all important.

After the Gateway Exhibition in May, 250 letters commenting were received. The proposed gateways were not greatly beloved by the citizens of Berkhamsted and the proposals have been dropped and standard gateways will be used.

I mentioned in the May newsletter that the Association was proposing to review its organisation and presentation with a view to making it more "user friendly" in modern day jargon. I invited views from the 1028 members and said I would take them into account in the next Newsletter. At a very approximate estimate, my desk is piled high at the moment with one. Some, of course, may have gone elsewhere and the summer season being what it is may not have filtered through. Perhaps we are perfect. Either way, I will leave it for the moment - so there is still time to make your views known.

Town Amenities

1. Berkhamsted School Playing Fields - Sports Pavilion. Some objections raised.
2. Houses at Fleur Field. Objections on the grounds of over-development.
3. Pitstone Landfill Quarry 2. Although strictly speaking this is outside our area, there is likely to be some impact and objections have been submitted.
4. By-Pass Demonstration Project. There are some concerns at the size of the humps at the junction of Charles Street and Kings Road.
5. New style Dacorum road sign. Objections on the grounds of inappropriateness.
6. Unsightly scaffolding at the Crystal Palace. DBC has been approached and they are dealing with the matter.
7. Trees in the High Street. Support for the council's decision to retain and replace has been sent to Herts CC.

Our programme secretary, Eric Drake, has penned a few words to introduce the forthcoming year's events, which I have appended to the Newsletter. It looks a pretty good programme to me.

The Events Programme

The list of events planned for the next year comes with this Newsletter. As usual, it includes three gentle strolls to nearby village pubs (and back if you feel energetic or haven't organised a lift!) The spring ramble has been moved from Easter to early May in the hope of better weather/less mud and perhaps the chance of enjoying the early bluebells. We are trying to build up a panel of members willing to lead rambles so that the burden does not always fall on the same one or two people. Would anyone willing to help in this way please contact Eric Drake (tel: 872536) or any member of the Committee.

The programme of indoor meetings should provide something to interest everyone. Talented local artist George Sear will be talking about his work in October and he will be followed in November by Robert Folkard, a veteran of several Himalayan expeditions from which he has brought back a fund of interesting stories and a fine collection of slides. Then in the new year, we will hear from two very different local writers: Bert Hosier whose 'Hedgehog's Northchurch' has been enjoying booming sales, and Richard Mabey, whose writing and broadcasting on natural history is always interesting and thought provoking. Do make a note in your diary of the dates of these meetings and mention them to any friends who may be interested. Non-members are welcome on payment of £1.00 at the door. (Association members get in free of course.)

Finally, there are the two perennially popular, members only events - the Christmas Celebration and the Summer Wine. The Christmas event will focus on carol singing in the traditional way. It will be held on a Saturday evening this year which we hope will be more convenient, particularly for those members who work away from the town.