

The Citizen



Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

October 2004

The Garden Party

Your editor reports:

Those members who braved the threat of rain, were treated to one of those rare events. A garden party.

What can we say? The weather was just right, the venue was just right, the event was - well, just right.

I had more than one comment suggesting that we make it a regular event. It is - just not an annual one!

Included in this issue (for those who couldn't make it) are some photographs to give you an idea of what you missed. For a selection of colour versions, why not visit our web-site at <http://www.bca.normcall.com>, where you can find more information about the association.

As well as the usual sideshows, we were treated to a fine display of Scottish Dancing by members of the Berkhamsted Strathspey & Reel Club.

This Club meets every Tuesday evening at Potten End Village Hall from September to May and holds garden dances every Saturday evening in June and July. Among other attractions are ceilidh evenings and a Highland Ball. Beginners and those with more experience are welcome to go along and exercise their minds and bodies to delightful music.

(Contact: Linda Godbold 01442 866651).



Notice of Special General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that a Special General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held in the Clock Room of the Town Hall, Berkhamsted on Wednesday 17th November 2004 at 8 p.m. to consider, and if thought fit, pass a resolution that in Clause 11 of the Association's Constitution, the word 'audited' shall be deleted and replaced by the words 'independently examined'.

Treasurer's comments:

The term audit has a very specific meaning within the profession. Only a Registered Auditor may carry out an audit and the work which needs to be performed in order to sign an audit report is more onerous than a simple review of an organisations accounts, which is all that is really necessary for small clubs and associations. Even what one would consider fairly large companies no longer legally require an audit and as a result, the number of Registered Auditors has declined and will continue to do so, leaving a much smaller pool of accountants to carry out this work.

We have thus far been fortunate enough to find local accountants willing to act in relation to the Associations affairs and changing our constitution to allow an 'independent examination' rather than an 'audit' will mean that this is a less onerous task and therefore time commitment to ask of them in what is, after all, an honorary position, and it will also open up the field to a larger pool of suitable candidates for the job.



Activities Sub-Committee - *Rita Jones - Chairman reports:*

The Garden Party

From all the comments I have heard, I think we may confidently say that the Garden Party was a great success. We would like to thank everyone who came, especially if you were wearing hats, and made it such a happy occasion. We should like particularly to thank all the volunteers (including those whose help was not needed because we had run out of space or jobs) whose assistance was invaluable and greatly appreciated, and contributed so much to the success of the afternoon.

Forthcoming Events

This year we are experimenting with holding the meetings (apart from Christmas and the AGM) in one of the other rooms at the Town Hall. The attendance is usually below a hundred and so these smaller rooms should be more suitable (and cheaper).

Thursday 14th October, 8 p.m., The Sessions Hall.

Anna Sims-‘Enjoy Breathing -“Inspiration for Life”’

Our first talk is by Anna Sims, an extended breathing and voice expert. Don’t let this job title put you off. What she actually does is teach singers how to breathe. Her clients include the Royal Opera, so her talk is not just for those of you who sing, but also for anyone interested in music, who would like to have a glimpse behind the scenes. She is also investigating how the techniques might help stroke sufferers with speech difficulties. This talk is not as specialised as you might think, so do come for an entertaining and inspiring evening.

Wednesday 17th November, 8 p.m., The Clock Room.

John Taylor -‘Wildlife at Tring Reservoir’

John Taylor works at Tring Pumping Station and so is well qualified to tell us about the wildlife there. Nature talks have always been popular so I look forward to a good attendance. A short Special General Meeting will precede this talk; see elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Saturday 4th December, 7.30 pm, The Great Hall

Derek Fowlds -‘A Berko Boy Returns’

There will be refreshments afterwards

We are pleased to be sharing this meeting with Berkhamsted Local History and Museum Society. Derek Fowlds, the popular TV star of ‘Heartbeat’ and ‘Yes Minister’, currently enjoying a welcome repeat, grew up in Berkhamsted and will reminisce about this time. His talk will be followed by refreshments. To help with catering, we are selling tickets in advance at the Bookstack, £3.50 for members of the Association and Society, and £4.50 for non-members. Tickets will also be available at the door at £5. Please notice the earlier start of 7.30 pm. I hope the change in format from our usual Christmas meeting will encourage many of you to reserve this date, at what is always a busy time of the year, and join us for what promises to be an enjoyable and festive evening.

2005, Saturday 1st January, 10.30 a.m. in front of Berkhamsted Station

Bill Willett will lead the Traditional New Year’s Day Ramble to Cholesbury (and back).

This is a new route for the start of the New Year and we hope for good weather. There will be a stop for lunch at the Full Moon, Cholesbury, and anyone wanting to do half the walk should arrange for transport home, as usual. Join us to walk off the excesses of the festive season.

Association Chairman Graham Spittle *adds*

While I heartily endorse all that the Vice-Chairman says, I must record the enormous debt of gratitude the Association owes to Rita Jones herself for all she did to make the Garden Party such a success. Ever since the event was first mooted, she has been the leading light in the preparations; not only hosting and chairing the planning meetings, but also arranging the bookings and personally executing much of the preparatory work. On the day, she was one of the first at the venue in the morning (having already been engaged in preliminary matters), one of the last to leave, and in between she directed operations while permanently engaged in the many tasks for which she had willingly volunteered, and then did more than her fair share of the clearing up.

Thank you indeed, Rita.

NEW CHAIRMAN NOW DECLARES WAR ON MOTORISTS

Our Chairman Graham Spittle our Chairman writes:

PAVEMENTS ARE FOR PEOPLE

This injunction appeared on a small sticker I noticed some time ago. It was affixed to the windscreen of a car parked on the pavement of the High Street, and I imagine it served as a gentle reminder to the driver upon his return that the increasingly prevalent practice of using the pavements of our Town as car parks is not only illegal, but highly antisocial.

Although parking offences are in many quarters considered trivial, those parking on the pavement also commit the offence of driving on the pavement before and after parking, and, being a moving traffic offence, this carries endorsement of the driver's licence with penalty points as well as a fine. However our local traffic warden (when we still had conventional wardens before parking was "decriminalised") gave me to understand that wardens were not encouraged to pursue the driving on the pavement aspect, but simply to issue parking tickets. I think this is a pity. Not only is it inherently dangerous for a motor vehicle to leave the road, but also the kerbs and the pavements and the service pipes beneath them are inevitably damaged even by private cars, and more so by what are very often heavy goods vehicles. Pedestrians suffer as a result from uneven surfaces and obstruction; often causing the dangerous necessity of walking in the road to get by.

Accordingly, I would be interested to know the origin of the sticker, which caused me to write this article. It gave the impression of being professionally produced, but I have not seen another one. Does anyone know of a person or organisation conducting an apparent campaign to preserve our pedestrian rights of way? If so I would be glad to hear more.

I am concerned that ill-considered sticker sticking may constitute criminal damage, or that individual actions of this nature may lead to reprisals, but if there is some properly constituted organisation which is lawfully protesting about the dangerous and antisocial behaviour of an increasingly large minority of citizens everywhere, I would be glad to join them...and I suspect many of our readers would too.

Editors comment:

I'm getting worried, last issue it was litter (OK, where is MacDonaldis in Berkhamsted?) and now pavement blocking. Perhaps the Association ought to get involved, as I understand in other areas, if the police get complaints, they have to take action - after all, you are reporting a crime, they have to take action!

The Christmas Photographic Competition

Those who attended the Garden Party will remember that our Chairman announced a photographic competition 'The Last 80 Years in Berkhamsted', to tie up with the celebrations for the 80th birthday of the Citizens Association.

The photograph/s should be taken by the competitor, and the display should not exceed A3 size. Please send or hand in entries to any member of the Committee, or hand them in at meetings, before 29th November.

They will be displayed and judged at the Meeting on 4th December.



Town Amenities Sub-Committee

Gordon Bluck writes:

I have to report that due to work commitments, Michael Johnson has had to resign from the committee and although he was only with us a short time I thank him for his involvement and support.

In the last few months I have been involved with the Castle Working Party which is a group set up by the Town Council to promote more visitors to the Castle. A meeting took place on site with English Heritage and we are trying to get them to agree to install, at Town council expense, information boards and release the copyright of the old information leaflet. The signs are a problem in that the content needs to be approved by English Heritage and they will charge a commercial rate for this which may be more than the signs themselves. Watch this space.

Turning to The Moor and the felling of the trees we understand this is now complete and they are deemed safe. A new body has been formed by the Town Council called the River Bulbourne Restoration Project and Tony Statham is our representative. The first meeting has taken place to decide terms of reference and a draft document produced to be signed by partners to the project and we hope this will supplement the work done by the Canal and Riverside Project. John Parsons attended the annual meeting of the Parish Paths Partnership and the £500 grant looks like being spent on the footpath near Bridgewater School. Regular readers of this report will recall that some years ago we received a similar sum to produce the footpath map. The map its self is still selling well through the main outlets at the Complete Outdoors in Bourne End and The Bookstack and it will not be long till we need a reprint. That will be 5000 sold. I will try and get a better quality paper for the reprint.

Tony Statham attended the final meeting of the Berkhamsted Health Check which had produced a weighty report which had some basic errors in it, which Tony and others pointed out. It was felt that a lot of money had been spent to tell us what we already knew. However there is funding for a co-ordinator to be appointed with 2 assistants to take forward the recommendations together with those for Tring.

Turning to planning applications we have objected to the Collegiate School plan to develop the site between Castle Street and Mill Street in its present format. Although we support the redevelopment of this area the current plan has repetitive gableing and so called

“ridge terminals” which make the new building look like an industrial unit. We are also in process of objecting to the retrospective application by Cape Fish for their new frontage done without permission on a listed building and of a poor standard. Once again I thank all my Committee for their hard work and particularly those who represent us so well on other bodies.

Photos from the Party



Above:

Some of the ‘party-goers’

Left top:

Tony Statham and our Chairman

Left bottom:

Citizen hat.

Below:

Selection of hats



And the winner is:

Mrs Talbot-Ponsonby
With her 1924 winning design, here being congratulated by our Deputy Mayor.

Contributions to:

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Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association

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