



September 2012

The Citizen

Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Working for the social and civic life of our community

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Hello to all you Citizens!

Thank you for electing me as your Chairman for the year. The AGM was a long time ago now and usually you would have received a summer newsletter. However, I broke my ankle in three places (if you are going to do it you might as well do it properly!) which left me incapacitated for many weeks. I am responsible for the newsletter in the absence of a volunteer editor, so I apologise that you haven't heard from us for a while.

I hope you have seen some of the updates on our website in the meantime, thanks to Paul's efforts.

It was great that Jude Egan was elected as a Committee member at the AGM and we welcome her contribution. However, we still have five empty spaces on our Committee, we do not have a deputy Chairman, the Activity sub-committee has been disbanded (Susan Johnson and Rita Jones organised the programme for this year for which we are very grateful) and we do not have a newsletter editor. Our membership is also lower than it has been for some years.

Our Committee members have worked tirelessly and continuously for many years to keep the BCA activities and wider representations going but we cannot rely on the few forever. Please think about whether you could get involved. You can come to a Committee meeting with no obligation to join to see what we do.

I remember to begin with the Committee did seem a bit daunting and I wasn't sure how I fitted in. However, now I know everyone better it is clear that there isn't a 'clique' or a type and I don't have to fit in! The main reason I enjoy Committee meetings is because I learn so much about what is happening in and around the Town. The meetings are fun and we do have a laugh. We also make a real difference in helping to improve the Town amenities.

Katy Brookes-Duncan

Summer Memories



Berkhamsted Street Party for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee at the High Street on 4 June. A beacon was lit at Ashlyns School that evening.



Berkhamstedian Ella Beaumont (GB junior wheelchair basketball team member) started the Head Teachers' torch relay for the Berkhamsted Games on 5 July.



Over 3,000 people saw the Paralympic Torch Relay go through the Town at 2am on 30 August.



Showaddywaddy played at Berkfest held at Berkhamsted Sports Club on 15 September.

ROBERT FOLKARD

Robert Folkard, a true gentleman of the "old school" and a long-time resident of Berkhamsted, died three days short of his 98th birthday in May this year.

He was born in 1914 in London but grew up in Hampshire. He qualified as a Chartered Surveyor, joined and then ran his father's firm, Folkard and Hayward in Baker Street; he became a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

During the Second World War he was a Captain in the Gunners serving on the North-West Frontier before being transferred to survey remote and wild country for the British Army which he much enjoyed.

Robert married in April 1950 and moved to Berkhamsted in 1951 when he and his wife Jean with two other couples, (the Farms and the Wiltshires) bought the Woodcock Hill estate near the top of Durrants Lane from a group of Carmelite nuns. They divided this large early Victorian mansion into four apartments and lived happily there for fifty-five years bringing up two sons and a daughter. Although the property now only has three apartments, the garden and grounds of 24 acres with fields, woods, ponds, and numerous outbuildings remains largely the same today.

In 2004 the grounds were made available to the BCA to celebrate its 80th anniversary with a garden party. Robert and his wife moved to Castle Mill in 2006.

Robert took a keen interest in climbing and walking and he trekked frequently in the Himalayas and other mountainous areas. He combined his talent in photography. Some years ago he gave a talk to the Association on his trekking experiences.

His other enduring interest was in philately and he specialised in the early stamps of Great Britain with an impressive collection; he was an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society of London.

Robert chaired the Northchurch Action Group which fought the original route proposed for the A41 and was successful in persuading the Department of Transport to adopt the route that exists today.

JOHN COOK

It is with the utmost sadness we mark the death of John Cook on 14th March 2012 at the age of 83, after a short illness.

A resident of the town for nearly 50 years, he contributed to Berkhamsted's civic and cultural life for all that time, and served as its Mayor three years in a row. He was active in St Peter's church, the town's major organisations, and contributed to the *Berkhamsted Review* like a true (and witty) journalist.

By profession he was a distinguished engineer working on railway systems both here and abroad. But for most of us he will be remembered as the town's historian, taking up the mantle from Percy Birchnell.

He served on the BCA Committee and TASC for many years, and was Chairman of this organisation from 1998 to 2000. John was a great asset to the BCA, of which he was made a Life Member. His work on surveying and describing buildings in the conservation area led directly to a higher profile for the Victorian/Edwardian streets and recently the establishment of their greater protection. He also edited *The Citizen* for ten years, transforming it into the format you see today; and following the untimely death of David Brunt, prepared and presented the annual Environment Award, at our AGM until only last year.

Several members of the current Committee attended his funeral on 24th March as, it seems, did half the town! The numbers and the tributes paid, reflected in what esteem and fondness he was held.

Electronic Newsletter

This will be the first newsletter and annual programme some of you will be receiving via email. If any others would like to receive it in this version, please let me know:
christopher@talbot-ponsonby.org

E-mail addresses will be maintained confidentially by the BCA. They will not be disclosed to other members or made available to third parties under any circumstances.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association.
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Environment Award 2011 - 12

In the January edition of The Citizen, we listed the contenders for the Environment Award. At our AGM in early March, 'certificates of commendation' were presented to Rob Grant, Estates Director for Berkhamsted School, for the Nash Harris Building at the Kings Road campus, and to Bill Macleod, architect for the developer W.E. Black, for Manor Croft in Manor Street.

The **Nash Harris Building** is a large red brick extension at the rear and side of the old School. The new building utilises its site well, with every space possible used effectively, without spoiling the inner courtyard. Much needed staff car parking is provided at the rear. The building is well-designed, simple, and effective. It also, blends well with the old building. The double height dining hall has substantial glazed areas overlooking the courtyard and this makes a pleasant backdrop to that area. The projecting oval-shaped end wall of the Chapel, reminiscent of the Media Stand at Lord's Cricket Ground, makes a statement of its different function very neatly and the rear elevation simply expresses the classrooms within. The distinctive metal surrounds to the doorways are another interesting feature which contrasts with the traditional brickwork. The only downside we found was the rather dull roofscape, which serves to emphasise the bulk of the new extension when viewed from an elevated position on Kings Road.

New Manor Croft is on the site of the old day centre on Manor Street. The development of fourteen homes of various sizes has made really good use of the site. The houses fit well into the Conservation area, and all has been detailed to this end. The buildings are nicely set around the central space, where there are enough green flower beds to offset the paving. Two of the original large trees have been carefully preserved to fill the space with green, a special touch! The car parking spaces have been subtly marked out by using darker paving blocks outlined in red. The road is light and dark red paving matching the red-brick 'soldier' course over the window lintels, and around the arched porches. The houses themselves - yellow facing bricks with red details, grey slate roofs and white windows in Victorian proportions seem to be well settled already, and a fitting addition to the Conservation area.

The search is already on for the Award winner for next year. If there are developments in the environment of the town that you think need recognition, please let your Committee know.

Jude Egan, New Committee Member



Jude Egan, originally from Yorkshire, moved to Berkhamsted in 1977 and brought up her two children here. They have now fled the nest.

Jude was first a teacher of English & Drama, but subsequently retrained as a social worker. When her children were small Jude worked part-time as a youth worker in the old Youth Club in Park View Road, since demolished. She currently works as a Family Therapist with Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services in Hemel Hempstead.

She has been a Governor of Thomas Coram Middle School, and is at present a Governor of Ashlyns School. She used to be an active member of the local Labour Party but is now far less involved. She has always had a keen interest in social issues; and is committed to promoting an increase in social housing within the town as well as improving services for young people.

Whilst finding it difficult to become too passionate about parking, despite living in the town centre, she does realise its importance to a great many people. Jude has always been interested in the built environment and describes her other interests as singing (with the Berkhamsted Choral Society), walking, reading and swimming.

S106 Money

The BCA are taking an interest in Dacorum Borough Council's use of S106 money paid by developers to improve the impact of new developments. Funds accrued from development in Berkhamsted are sitting in Dacorum's coffers. Some funding has now been released but we will stay on the case!

Town Amenities Sub-Committee

Paul Crosland

Since becoming involved with the Citizens Association and the Town Amenities Sub-Committee in particular, I have noticed that some things in our town happen quickly, while others drag on and on. The switching-off of street lights in side roads is one subject that came to our attention – thanks to our County Councillor, Ian Reay – in January, and by the end of February, had been implemented! The BCA requested Dr. Reay to lobby the CC on behalf of the town's residents, and he was successful in having the lights kept on Lower Kings Road, allowing night-time rail travellers to get to and from the town centre by street light. There was a strong body of opinion in favour of delaying the switch-off until 1 a.m but County would not budge on the timings. In these times of public spending reductions, all councils will be looking at all expenditure to secure savings, but these need to be proportionate and reasonable.

A subject which has dragged on without resolution, if indeed there is a solution to be had, is that of parking, and the proposals for Residents' Parking Zones (RPZs). There were lively exchanges at the Town Meeting on 19th April. The BCA wrote in opposition to the RPZ proposals that were exhibited in June 2011, and sees no reason to change its view at this stage. If you have kept up with developments, and would like to make your views known, please email Paul Crosland at peejaycee@yahoo.com.

As noted in the January edition of 'The Citizen', the BCA has strongly requested the Town Council to reconsider its view that a Neighbourhood Plan for Berkhamsted – developed for and by its residents – is not required. The Town Council Planning Committee believes the views of Berkhamsted residents have been adequately canvassed during the preparation of the Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy. Particularly in view of the time and effort required to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, and secure its endorsement through a referendum, The Town Council sees such an exercise offering no little or no benefit.

TASC is investigating means of securing the provision of additional public notice-boards and will work closely with the Town Clerk on this matter.

TASC members recently assisted the Town Council in surveying the condition of the High Street pavements and footways, between Rectory Lane and Park View Road. The object of the exercise was to record faults and get the highways authority, Herts County Council to fix them, according to priority. We look forward to some improvement in the coming weeks and months.

In Planning news, TASC has supported other local bodies in continuing to object to the Astroturf hockey pitch at Kitchener's Field. Our objection centres on the intrusion of the development into the Green Belt. TASC also objected to the 'futuristic' design proposal for 32, Castle Hill, the Farm Place - the housing association development on the corner of the High Street with Durrants Lane (inadequate aspects of the design) and 18 Park Street (paving over front gardens in the Conservation Area). We noted that the Planning

Authority has rejected the application for the redevelopment of the Grey House site in Kitsbury Road, and the developer has given notice of his intention to appeal against this decision.

In the first week of May, there was an exhibition in the Civic Centre setting out proposals for a M&S 'Simply Food' store to occupy the site of the former Royal Mail delivery office in the High Street. Subject to receiving planning approval, the store would open in the autumn of 2013.

BCA Activities

Susan Johnson

We have cobbled together some talks and walks for the forthcoming year and with this newsletter you will receive your usual 'card' of goodies. The list will also appear in the Arts Trust 'Green Sheet' for the wider public. However, if we do not have some new volunteers to help with this task by the next AGM, the activities side of the BCA will disappear in 2013; which would be a shame. I know it is something that the membership holds dear and enjoys enormously; and it often introduces us to new members. So think about how you could help!

Our first talk this year, on **Thursday 11th October**, is a first for Tring as well as Berkhamsted. It will be an illustrated talk, especially developed for this Association by Tim Amsden and Mike Bass on how Tring became the first town in Dacorum to get its own Local History Museum. I am also a member of the Berkhamsted History & Museum Society. So we are looking for a wide audience from both towns and all members of like-minded associations. The following talk will be on **Thursday 8th November** and will be a rerun of the illustrated talk on College Lake, Bulbourne which unfortunately had to be cancelled earlier this year. I know many of you were disappointed then, and will welcome this opportunity to see and hear about the transformation of the former chalk quarry. Look out for the posters for these and all future events. Tell your friends!

Membership Counts

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby

A big welcome to our 6 new members! They include: one who joined at a talk; two who joined at the AGM; one downloaded our details from our website and one picked up a form from the library. Our membership is now 402. It is important that we maintain our membership levels to still have an influence in the developments in the Town. Please ask a friend and or a neighbour if they are members. If not encourage them to join by sending me £5 along with their name and address. It would be marvellous if we can get it back to the same level as it was in 2009 (419).

There are currently 65 members with outstanding subscriptions. If you are one of them, a reminder will be enclosed with this newsletter. If you think you have paid, please let me know, so I can check my records.