

MOTTINGHAM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER 6

SPRING 1974

FOREWORD FROM THE PRESIDENT:

The problems of 1974 are going to be more difficult to solve than in previous years, and solutions very much more expensive.

For many of us the "do it yourself" story has become part of our leisure activity. This may be because we cannot afford to have the job done professionally; we are dissatisfied with the results of jobs done in the past; or because we have discovered a satisfaction in the personal "doing".

"Doing-it-yourself" is, of course, conservation: whether it be a coat of new paint for the house; digging for "Victory" (we have a Horticultural Society in Mottingham); or saving waste paper - if only someone would collect it! Unfortunately, there are those who do not care, or worse, who destroy the amenities shared by the community.

Do we, perhaps, take too much for granted? Do we rely overmuch on other people doing the job and then criticise the way in which the job has been done?

Only by personal participation and constant alertness can we prevent further deterioration of accepted standards and avoid being unpleasantly surprised at events overtaking us.

The principal object of our Association is to preserve the amenities of Mottingham, and I ask YOU as a member to attend the Annual General Meeting to discuss with us the best way to realise this objective.

An especial welcome is extended to all new residents.

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR!

Dear Member,

With this edition of the "Motttingham News" we extend to you an invitation to attend the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING taking place on Tuesday, the 21st May next, in the Maryfield Hall, Leysdown Road, at 8.00 p.m.

You will appreciate that Local Authorities - often reluctant to take action on any matter - on occasion will yield to the pressure of local opinion. Your continued support of the Association will ensure that such pressure is maintained. So do avail yourself of the opportunity by coming along to the meeting to have your say.

We offer our thanks to the Bromley and Greenwich Councillors who attend our Committee Meetings and give advice and guidance when called upon.

Finally, the changed format of the present "Newsletter" is due to circumstances beyond our control. We hope, however, that you will find its content well up to the previous standard.

Yours sincerely,

DENIS FITZGERALD

ROAD REPRESENTATIVES:
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We have not included a list of Road Representatives in view of possible changes at the Annual General Meeting. A complete list will be given in our next issue.

Road Representatives have again done a splendid job and we anticipate that the membership figures of last year will be maintained. To date, three roads have 100% membership, and eight roads have a membership exceeding 95%.

It is true to say that your Association could not function without Road Representatives, and their efforts are warmly appreciated.

Due to helpers moving from the area, etc., we usually find ourselves in need of five or six Representatives each year, and an offer from any member able to devote a few hours to the work of the Association will be gratefully accepted.

Although essential, the job is not difficult and does not involve attendance at meetings. Printed road lists are available, and "door-knocking" may be done at any time suitable to yourself. It provides an opportunity to meet people. Why not volunteer to help your Association at the Annual General Meeting; or, if unable to attend, contact Reg Cambridge, the Subscription Secretary, Tel. 857 1291.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Committee Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of alternate months (the next bi-monthly meeting will be in May). Sub-committee Meetings are held as, and when, occasion warrants.

ROAD SAFETY

G R E E N W I C H

Our delegate to the Greenwich Borough Council Road Safety Advisory Council has continued to urge the necessity for pedestrian safety improvement at the Court Road/Sidcup Road junction. We regret that we are unable to report success so far.

A traffic depth analysis taken recently disclosed that accidents at this crossing had resulted in injuries only. It would seem that fatal accidents have to occur before the Authorities concerned consider action necessary.

While we deplore this "accident first - prevention later"

attitude, we have to accept that there are equally dangerous crossings in the Greenwich area and presumably a priority rota has been prepared.

The Safety Advisory Council have stated that the main contributory factors to the danger are (a) the excessive speed of motorists turning left from Court Road (by "The Royal") into Sidcup Road and (b) the failure of motorists travelling along the Sidcup Road to conform to traffic lights.

We shall continue to highlight the dangers and we urge all members - both motorist and pedestrian - to use extreme caution at this junction.

B R O M L E Y

We congratulate the Mottingham Junior School on winning the Orpington Rotary Club plaque presented to the school obtaining the highest number of marks for road safety. Well done!

King John's Walk: Residents will be pleased to know that Bromley Council have supported our contention that King John's Walk should remain a footpath and not a bridleway.

CONSERVATION: =====

We were invited by the Greenwich Borough Council to nominate a delegate to serve on the recently-formed Conservation Area Advisory Council. Mr. Reg Cambridge, of Lavidge Road, attended the first meeting in January which was principally concerned with procedure and guide lines for future meetings.

The designated areas do not, as yet, include Mottingham, but the Committee's Terms of Reference include for "consideration of proposals or applications for development in areas abutting the specified Areas", and Mottingham would certainly be included within this category.

We welcome this new approach by Greenwich Council to environmental preservation/conservation problems and are pleased to

have been given the opportunity to participate in a matter vital to the preservation of amenities generally.

It would appear that local Authorities are becoming concerned at the increase in fragmentation development and that future applications will receive approval only if the development conforms to a master-plan covering the whole area. To give an example: we understand that application for development in Court Road (between Sidcup Road and Eltham) will not be granted until a master-plan for Court Road development is available to developers.

We have commented on aspects of "planning" requiring serious consideration in a previous issue of the "Mottingham News".

Residents are vitally concerned - or should be - at environmental change affecting residential standards, and a numerically strong Association can "get the message through" on occasion.

The increasing tendency for local Authorities to invite resident participation in the administration of the community should - and optimism costs nothing - lead to a more rapid implementation of Council policy.

FIND THE BOUNDARY!

(No Prizes Offered)

When the Memorial roundabout was installed, Bromley Council painted yellow lines on both sides of West Park to a point approximately five yards inside the Greenwich Council area. This was rectified at a later date by "blacking out" the yellow lines back to the boundary.

At the request of your Association, Greenwich Council agreed to extend the yellow lines along West Park to keep the approach to the roundabout free of parked cars.

You would have supposed, would you not, that the extension would have been from the boundary. Not so: the extension was made from the end of the "blacked-out" section!

Greenwich Council have been requested to "close the gap" to their boundary with Bromley. The astonishment of the official at the reason for the request is perhaps understandable!

We understand that the police regard the yellow line/lines as being continuous and motorists are, therefore, advised against parking on the blacked-out section. It may be that the gap will have been closed before this reaches you, but the wheels of official-dom "grind exceedingly slow" on occasion. Better to be safe than sorry.

MORE STRIP-TEASE IN MOTTINGHAM!

The 10th Anniversary of the formation of the Mottingham Townswomen's Guild (Afternoon Section) was celebrated by a luncheon held in St. Andrew's Church Hall on Wednesday the 17th January and presided over by Mrs. Stirling, the 1974 Chairman. Seventy-four members and guests from the North Kent Federation and representatives of neighbouring Guilds sat down to a splendid meal, the preparation of which was in the capable hands of Mrs. Leddra, a well-known Mottingham personality, and her three able assistants.

After a short address by the Chairman, a cheque for £40 was presented on behalf of the Guild to Mrs. Walker for the provision of bedside lockers at the Bermondsey Medical Mission. The funds for the presentation were raised at the Mottingham Week Fair held last summer.

Following the meal, a display was presented by the Keep Fit section of the Guild, under the direction of Mrs. Hurrell, combining songs and movement of the First World War period. The singers were dressed in long black skirts and white shirts. Women's Lib of the period? The item closed with a demonstration of Dad's Army-type physical jerks! The next item brought a touch of Soho to Mottingham when the Keep Fitters put on a period strip-tease act finishing up, as decorum would demand, in long satin bloomers adorned with sequins. The concluding item demonstrated the more serious side of the Keep Fit section with a eurhythmic series of ball manipulation to the skilful accompaniment of Mrs. King on the piano.

To those ladies of Mottingham who are not already members of the Guild, a warm welcome is extended to come and join us at meetings held in St. Andrew's Church Hall, Court Road, on the first Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. There is a wide variety of activity including Social Studies, Arts and Crafts, Choir, Keep Fit and Gardening. A wide range indeed, but most of all we offer friendship.

OXFORD HOUSE DAY CENTRE.

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Some twelve or more years ago, Mrs. E. Rogers, with the help of friends and neighbours, opened a weekly luncheon club for the elderly in the Methodist Church Hall in Mottingham Village. This proved to be a great success, and when the attendance grew we were offered the Y.M.C.A. Pavilion where the Luncheon Club still meets each Thursday.

The need for a Day Centre and Meals-on-Wheels Service for Mottingham and Chislehurst was always in our minds; and in 1962 Mrs. Rogers once again formed a Committee of local residents who, after many fund-raising efforts, opened Oxford House Day Centre for the Elderly in the school grounds, Ravensworth Road, by kind permission of Mr. Welbourne who was then Education Officer for Chislehurst and Sidcup Urban District Council.

The Day Centre is open five days a week and now has a staff of six assisted by six voluntary helpers, some of whom have been with us since we opened ten years ago.

We serve up to 100 meals each weekday at 12p per meal in the Hall and up to 50 meals-on-wheels are delivered daily from the Centre by the Chislehurst Division British Red Cross voluntary drivers. Two private cars and one van loaned by Bromley Borough Council are used for the purpose.

Although Oxford House has been enlarged and the kitchen re-equipped by the Council, we now find that the kitchen and staff are working to capacity and struggling to avoid a waiting list of needy elderly in the district.

The members themselves run a flourishing Social Section with many entertainments and Day Outings to the coast and places of interest.

The Cray Valley Adult Education Department provide teachers for dressmaking and dancing classes each week, and a hair stylist attends each Wednesday. There are also regular Chiropody and Hearing-Aid Clinics at the Centre.

We have also a representative on the Bromley Borough Age Concern Joint Committee whose help, together with the Bromley Borough Council, has been invaluable.

Owing to the ever-rising cost of food our task to-day would be impossible but for the meals subsidy and special grants made available through "Age Concern", Bromley Borough Council.

We are a voluntary organisation and a Registered Charity. The members of the Management Committee know that much more could be done for local elderly people; but within the limitations imposed by lack of funds and facilities at our disposal, we hope that least the plight of the pensioner has been eased a little.

WHERE DOES ALL THE MONEY GO?

Road Representatives are sometimes asked: "What do you do with all the money you collect each year?" A good question - at least, denoting interest in the work of the Association.

To give a complete answer it is necessary to go back a number of years to the time when the annual subscription was two shillings and sixpence. When the iniquitous currency decimalisation was foisted upon us (surely the biggest "con" this country has ever been forced to accept), the subscription became 12½p

The disappearing sixpence and the little used ½p presented difficulties in collection, and members decided at an Annual

General Meeting to increase the subscription to 15p, since when it has been maintained at this figure despite rising costs of printing, postage, telephone, etc.

So how is your 15p expended?

Well, firstly, you receive two copies of the "Mottingham News" each year, at a publishing cost of 8p. Approximately 1p is passed to a reserve balance, leaving 6p to cover printing (subscription cards, letter heads, etc.), postage, telephone, hire of hall for meetings, donations to local charities, purchase of Council Minutes, etc. etc.

We are fortunate in having Mr. Peter Osborne as Treasurer. His meticulous scrutiny of accounts obviates any tendency to over-spend.

Only the fact that the work of your Association is carried on by voluntary labour enables the subscription to be maintained at a surprisingly low figure considering the ever-increasing costs involved.

The subscription is determined each year by Members - not by the Committee - at the Annual General Meeting at which a detailed Balance Sheet is available to all.

We welcome the views of members on finance - as indeed on all matters, - and invite you to attend the Annual General Meeting - the meeting at which you express those views.

DOES ANYBODY WANT A PROBATION HOSTEL?

The Metropolitan Police Office has applied for planning permission to convert No. 39 West Park into a Probation Hostel for young offenders against the law.

We ^{UM} have made a strong protest to the Greenwich Borough Council Planning Officer backed by a petition signed by 146 residents in West Park and Luxfield Road.

The fact that only seven people declined the invitation to object, indicates the strong feeling against the provision of this type of establishment in Mottingham Village.

10: SPO Warden - 12mos -

===== RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AT RISK =====

The Y.M.C.A. have applied for outline planning permission for the development of the Sports ground off Grove Park Road.

A petition against the application has been signed by all residents whose houses back on to the Sports Ground and this has been forwarded to the Bromley Borough Council Planning Officer.

We support the objection on the grounds:-

- (1) The loss of yet another sports ground in an area sadly lacking recreational facilities.
- (2) The increased traffic hazards involved in access to/from Grove Park Road which already has a high accident incidence.
- (3) The further over-loading of inadequate drainage and surface water disposal. (Members will recall the recent flooding of houses in this road).
- (4) Deterioration of amenities hitherto enjoyed.

We understand that Eltham College will also support the objection.

===== TO ALL WEARY MEMBERS! =====

In consultation with Bromley Borough Council, your Association agreed to plant a tree outside the Library as a contribution to "Plant-a-Tree" year, and to replace the seat destroyed by teenagers "finding an outlet for excess energy" - or "vandals", if you prefer.

In view of the "wear and tear" to which the previous

seat was subjected, your Committee decided against a replacement of the aesthetically-pleasing all-wooden variety, and opted for a concrete structure with wood-slat seating.

We hope that the seat will provide a half-way rest for weary shoppers and/or accommodation for non-drinking wives waiting while husbands settle the affairs of the Nation over a pint in the local hostelry!

PARKING

We are grateful to the local police for their efforts in keeping the shopping area free from the danger of parked cars, especially during the busy Saturday morning period.

The increase in traffic using Mottingham Road resulting from the uncertainty of rail transport has worsened the problems caused by parking in the shopping area - the narrowest part of Mottingham Road.

The local parking problem is being examined by your Association in consultation with both Bromley and Greenwich Borough Councils.

YOU CAN HELP:

The Residents' Participation pilot scheme operated by Greenwich Borough Council is reported to be an unqualified success. It provides residents with an opportunity to inform the local authority of defects requiring attention, e.g. paving stones, trees in need of pruning, etc.

Prepaid cards addressed to the Council are available at any library within the Greenwich Borough Council area.

Unfortunately, the same facility is not, as yet, available to residents in the Bromley Council area, but we have recommended that they follow the Greenwich pattern.

MOTTINGHAM WEEK:

The "pennies have been counted" and the books finally closed. The result? £200 available for charity, which can't be bad for a function not primarily organised for fund-raising.

Councillor Alistair McDonald ("Mottingham Week" Treasurer) has sent a cheque for £50 to each of:-

Eltham & Mottingham Hospital
The Friends of Task Force
Mottingham Community Centre
Oxford House (Old People's Centre).

Many local organisations contributed much time and effort to the success of the venture, which we hope will be repeated.

The inevitable "creaks in the machinery" of any "first-off" function were of minor character and the experience gained will ensure smoother running in any future attempt.

Support exceeded expectation.

Well done, Mottingham!

MEMORIAL SERVICE:

We are of the opinion that the large number of residents who attended the Memorial Service would wish that this solemn occasion should become part of the Mottingham scene - an occasion when all denominations can unite in common service to the community.

Why not? One occasion, at least, when religious difference of opinion can be set aside.

The "impracticable considerations", raised previously, were largely discounted: the "Porcupine" forecourt proved adequate, and drivers behaved with commendable restraint.

We suggest that the traditional British Legion hymn: "O valiant hearts" be included in future services.

"YOURS TRULY"

An excellent newspaper especially for older people is published free each month by Help the Aged. Entitled "Yours", it is brim full of information, ideas and news of what our senior citizens are contributing to society. Copies are distributed on a voluntary basis by youth organisations.

The astonishing success of this new venture was highlighted in the National press recently when it was announced in February that the journal had reached a circulation of one million copies in under six weeks.

MOTTINGHAM CHURCHES GET TOGETHER:

The Churches in Mottingham have recently been making some progress towards greater unity and co-operation. Each month lay representatives from the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches meet in each others homes. From these meetings has grown a spirit of friendship and understanding. More and more projects are being planned jointly. The Churches may seem incredibly slow to heal their historical divisions, but at grass roots level - where it matters most - a movement has begun which will be hard to stop.

MOTTINGHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY:

The Mottingham Horticultural Society exists to help home gardeners in their horticultural pursuits. This is rather a highflown way of saying that if you want any help with your gardening, it might be in your interest to become a member of the Society.

We run a trading shed at 22, Devonshire Road, where advice and goods are available; and hold two Shows during the year. The Summer Show will be held on SATURDAY, the 29th JUNE, 1974, at St. Andrew's Church Hall; and the Autumn Show on SATURDAY, the 7th SEPTEMBER, 1974, At Eltham College.

Subscription: 20p per annum - Senior Citizens 12½p
per annum.

Enquiries to: The Hon. Secretary,
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