



MOTTINGHAM NEWS

MOTTINGHAM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER 8

MARCH 1975

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I suppose most of us regret the passing of the old year; but whatever the political or economic situation might become it is really only helpful to be optimistic about 1975. Being optimistic, however, cannot mean being apathetic and waiting until the last horse has bolted or our last pound has been spent, before we either lock the gate or go to the bank, or (nowadays) to our employer!

1974 has been a year of change in our Association as it has been in national and local attitudes, and it would appear that 1975 will have as many, if not more, changes. These need not be destructive as long as there are not too many all at once.

We are fortunate that in Mottingham we still have a village identity. Although some of our shops change rather quickly, we still have an on-going community of which some other "London suburbs" might well be envious. If one seeks a "better hole", where does one find it? The rose-covered country cottage may have beetle, flood or isolation problems (and I hate to think what the fares might be); and even with a home at the seaside, most of the fish will have come from Billingsgate! By the way, if anyone is moving to the country or the seaside, please let me know as it makes a lovely day out!

Seriously, though, in 1975 whoever is elected at the A.G.M. (and please make a note of the date: APRIL 29th), will try to keep what is good, try to maintain what is new, and encourage development that seems sensible. In such a complex community it is impossible to please all. We are sorry if we have disappointed you. We will try to do better, but YOUR voice needs to be heard - the old and the young. If you have some spare time, let us know. Mottingham looks for those wishing to keep abreast of changing times.

I should like to pay tribute to the work of the Chairman, Officers and the Committee. Especial thanks are due to the Secretary for first-class Agendas, Minutes and correspondence; to our Membership Secretary and the Road Representatives without whom we would not exist.

It is my hope that 1975 will prove to be a happy one in our "Mottinghome".

David L. Porter,
President

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

I trust that you will forgive me for making this foreword a personal one.

The majority of the membership of any active Association will agree, I am sure, that a periodic change in management is beneficial, although there will be divergent opinions as to the length of the period of office.

Having occupied the chair for five years (with the exception of a short period), I am of the opinion that a fresh approach to problems would be in the interests of the Association.

With Local Government decisions ever more dependent upon political considerations, it becomes increasingly difficult for a Chairman holding definite views to maintain an unbiased Chairmanship.

Although having decided not to stand for re-election to the Committee, I shall be happy to continue to serve as a Road Representative.

This opportunity is taken to thank publicly all Officers and the Executive Committee who have contributed so much during my term of Office; and to convey my best wishes for the continued successful functioning of the Association.

The Chairman

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OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & DELEGATES: 1974/75

(Subject to change at the A.G.N.)

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT: Mr. D.L. Porter: 23, Grove Park Road
 CHAIRMAN: Mr. F.D. Cater-Smith: 2, West Park
 VICE-CHAIRMAN: Mr. G. Jenkins: 61, Court Farm Road
 HON. SECRETARY: Mrs. M.V. Gardner: 55, Leysdown Road
 HON. TREASURER: Mrs. M.E. Davies: 1, Cedar Mount,
 Mottingham Lane

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Mr. L. Bannister: 68, Leysdown Road
 Mrs. M.A. Browning: 28, Leysdown Road
 Mr. R.C. Cambridge: 7, Lavidge Road
 Mr. C.A. Durell: 54, Jevington Way
 Mr. C. Gillard: 44, Lavidge Road
 Mrs. T.G. Kirk: 10, Scotsdale Close,
 Orpington
 Mrs. N.I. Moncur: 234, Court Road
 Mrs. R.M. Robinson: 32, West Park
 Mr. H.F. South: "Littleholme",
 Mottingham Lane
 Mrs. E. Thompson: 14, Porcupine Close

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Mr. R.C. Cambridge
 BROMLEY RESIDENTS' FEDERATION: Delegate: Mrs. M.A. Browning
 NEW ROADS SUB-COMMITTEE: Chairman: Mrs. Browning with
 Messrs. Bannister & Durell
 ROAD/HOME SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Bromley: Mrs. T.G. Kitk
Greenwich: Mrs. N.I. Moncur
 GREENWICH BOROUGH COUNCIL: Planning & Environmental Group:
 Mr. R.C. Cambridge
Liaison Group: Mr. F.D. Cater-Smith
 OXFORD HOUSE COMMITTEE: Liaison Member: Mrs. N.I. Moncur

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS:

Bromley: Cllr. A.H. Macdonald: 79 Oakdene Avenue, Chislehurst
 Cllr. R.W. Huzzard: 37 Hollingsworth Rd, Petts Wood
Greenwich: Cllr. E.P. Keating: 1, Beanshaw, S.E. 9.
 Cllr. R.L. Martin: 11, Crouchcroft, S.E. 9.

ROAD REPRESENTATIVES

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%.

Our Subscription Secretary, Mr. Reg Cambridge, has once again surpassed the proverbial beaver !

Due to helpers moving from the area, etc., we usually find ourselves in need of nine or ten 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?

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of alternate months. Sub-Committee meetings are held as and when occasion warrants.

We are indebted to Councillors of both Bromley and Greenwich Councils who are invited to attend our meetings and who raise matters in Council on our behalf, when requested.

THE PUBLIC ARE THE EYES OF THE POLICE

PREVENTION TAKES CARE OF CRIME

IF YOU SEE ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS - DIAL 999

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY, 1974

A fine, dry morning enabled a crowd of between two and three hundred, young and old, to attend the Remembrance Service held on "The Porcupine" forecourt. The Service was conducted by the Rector of St. Andrew's, the Rev. Christopher Byers, assisted by Father Desmond from Our Lady Help of Christians. The choir from St. Andrew's under the direction of Choirmaster Godfrey Hurst, led the hymn singing in spirited manner.

The maroons from the guns of the Royal Artillery at Woolwich marked the beginning and the end of the two minutes silence. The Rev. Byers reminded the assembled company of the recent bomb attacks at Woolwich and elsewhere, which had highlighted the events of the past wars. A poppy wreath was laid on the War Memorial by Mr. W.G. Fuller, on behalf of the Mottingham Residents' Association, and other tributes were laid later.

The Royal British Legion's "Act of Remembrance" was recited following the wreath-laying ceremony.

The restoration of our Service of Remembrance is very much appreciated by many in Mottingham.

VISIT TO GEFERY'S HOMES

On Tuesday, 28th January, 1975, a small party of Association members paid an evening visit to see some of the conversion work being done by the G.L.C. in the South Block of Geffery's Homes.

The Homes were built in 1912 to the design of George Hubbard. They were erected by the Ironmongers Company when they moved from their original Almshouses in Kingsland Road, Shoreditch, which now house the Geffrye Museum. In 1973 the Mottingham Homes were included in a list of buildings of "special architectural or historic interest" by the Department of the Environment.

The buildings have long been a landmark in Mottingham and the people who knew the Home when it was used as an Almshouse were particularly interested in the work which had been done to convert the block into four modern two-person flats. The accommodation comprises a double-bedroom, dining room, kitchen and bathroom, all to modern standards. Gas-fired central heating has been used and the kitchen and bathroom

facilities are of a particularly good standard. Despite the alterations, the building still maintains its old charm and the delightful landscaped setting is to be retained and improved.

Although during the tour the temporary lighting which had been laid on for the visit, failed, this did not detract from the visit and the inspection continued with the aid of moonlight and torches.

All in all, it was a very worthwhile exercise and one which the Association would hope to repeat in the future.

(Editor's Note: We are indebted to our Vice-Chairman, Graham Jenkins, for arranging this visit).

TOWN PLANNING

All planning applications for development within the Association area are carefully studied by our Vice-Chairman, Mr. Jenkins; and in those cases where the development is considered to be disadvantageous to the interest of members or out of keeping with the surrounding environment, we oppose the application at either Bromley or Greenwich Councils.

Members likely to be affected by a planning application are advised, and their views ascertained before any decision by your Committee is made: as, for example, the proposed demolition of "Greet" and "Roselands" in Mottingham Lane for re-development. A census of Mottingham Lane residents indicated a majority against the proposal and we have therefore opposed the re-development.

We regret having to announce that we "lost out" on the re-development at the top of West Park, where four good-quality houses were recently demolished. You win some, you lose some - you can't win 'em all !

TREDGOLD UNIT, GROVE PARK HOSPITAL

This hospital, one of the largest in the region for diseases of the chest, is now going over to the care of mentally handicapped patients who are from Lewisham, Bromley or Greenwich.

Grove Park Hospital was built at the turn of the century and was originally used as a workhouse. During the first World War, soldiers were billeted in the wards. Between

the wars it became a sanatorium and has some 420 beds for the treatment of patients with pulmonary tuberculosis. Over the years, as this disease became less prevalent, the need for prolonged hospital treatment diminished. There was, however, a rapid increase in other thoracic diseases, in consequence of which the nature of the hospital changed and it became a centre for the medical and surgical treatment of all diseases of the chest. As medicine has advanced and new antibiotics have been discovered, many diseases of the chest can be treated at home after a short spell of hospitalisation. In view of this and of the great urgency to provide local accommodation for the mentally handicapped, it has been decided that there will be a gradual conversion to this speciality. The aim is to have small units which will create an atmosphere as much like home as possible for the residents who will occupy them.

The name of the first unit is TREDGOLD, to commemorate the late Dr. Tredgold who contributed much to the care of mental subnormality.

All patients at Tredgold were transferred from Darenth Park Hospital and have readily accepted Tredgold as their home. Their dependency is such that some efforts at rehabilitation can be made. The number of patients is 21 at present and more are to follow from Darenth Park Hospital until the maximum number of 35 is reached. So far only a few of its residents are attending a training centre in Lewisham, but we hope that more are to follow. Our gardening project is growing quite fast. At the League of Friends Fete, held at the end of June, a fair contribution was made by the Tredgold residents. Help from the Gateway Club at Orpington, our W.V.S. and the League of Friends has been considerable.

Links with the community are slowly becoming firmly established. The residents in and near Marvels Lane overcame their initial fear when invited to see Tredgold for themselves and have made many offers of help since. All that remains to be said now is that Tredgold, the first unit in Grove Park Hospital, is ready to establish further contacts with the community. Anyone who is genuinely interested and willing to help can contact me:-

R. Semrock, Nursing Officer,
Grove Park Hospital;
or at 14, Carters Hill Close,
Mottingham Lane, S.E. 9.

WE CANNOT GO ON AT THIS RATE !
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The stock reply to any enquiry concerning rate escalation is: "If you want services you must be prepared to pay for them". This is fair comment until an analysis is made of the way the money is spent and of the priority accorded to items of local expenditure.

No one will disagree that services must be maintained, but in these times of financial stringency only essential services should be maintained at their present level.

Despite exhortations from all quarters to prune expenditure, Town Hall financial "experts" appear to be competing with each other in spending money on items that could very well be pigeon-holed until we have clawed our way out from the present financial morass.

It would require very little effort to fill pages of this "Newsletter" with examples of such expenditure, but a few at random will suffice to indicate that some, at least, of rate-payers' money is being spent with total disregard to appeals for economy; is, in fact, being wasted. This is unpardonable when bills ratepayers are being asked to meet grow prodigiously year by year.

In their publication "Contact" - the distribution of which itself could very well be suspended pro tem - Greenwich Borough Council state that "the Recreational Services Committee will be looking carefully at its plans to decide whether to switch money from less essential schemes to make best use of the finance available". A praiseworthy sentiment, but we are also informed that the Council intend to proceed with the Greenwich Festival, the Greenwich Show and the construction of the vast Charlton Sports Centre.

Are not these "less essential schemes", AT THIS TIME?

Is it essential to distribute hundreds of copies of a 69-page first draft of a Proposed Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest? The final set will undoubtedly be as glossy and as expensively produced as the set of 40-page booklets, "A Guide to Planning in Greenwich" - recently distributed.

I am all for the dissemination of information of Council activities, but is this the time for expenditure on such items?

Is it essential AT THIS TIME for Lambeth Borough Council to acquire a block of 21 residential flats in the Bromley Council area at a cost of £230,000?

Almost too incredible to believe is the report that Wandsworth Borough Council is "proposing to purchase 52 rooms at a cost of £24,000 per room"! Municipal "service", would you say, or financial lunacy?

Since April 1974, 14,000 office workers have been recruited by local authorities at a cost of £54 million in one year for extra salaries alone. In a statement to the press on 25th February, the Secretary of the National Association of Local Councils made it clear that rate increases were due to over-staffing.

Councillors have voted salaries to officials - I refrain from comment on "expenses" - which even a Labour Minister considered excessive! Bexley Council are advertising for a Chief Executive at a salary of £12,000 a year with no experience needed. When the advertisement was queried, a Councillor replied: "The Council has advertised, but I don't see how a man who knows nothing about running a council will be able to cope"! Comments by Bexley ratepayers are couched in rather stronger terms!

Is it essential AT THIS TIME to continue with the politically-motivated policy of "progressive extension of social ownership"? Every private property acquired is a progressive charge on the rates; it has to be maintained and is let at a subsidised rent with, in the majority of cases, a rent rebate.

If you doubt the validity of that statement, the views of a London Council Chairman may convince:-

"Council houses should be sold off cheaply to tenants or let rent-free to save money. At present the huge burden of supporting Council tenants falls on the ratepayer. There is no relation now between the costs of upkeep and the rents charged. Private ratepayers are having to subsidise council housing on a massive scale".

So much for the veracity of the vote-catching statements of some Councillors that economic rents are being charged for council-owned property.

The Geffery Homes site in Mottingham Road is now being developed by the G.L.C., and modern, self-contained, centrally heated carpeted flats will be available at less than £9 per week. Does anybody believe that this rent is non-subsidised?

It is reported in the national press that the number of Distress Warrants issued for non-payment of rates is now

approaching "administrative danger level". Whereas, previously, these were issued in respect of persistent rate dodgers, they are now being issued against respectable house-owners who had taken pride in being able to claim that they "owed not a penny", but who now find it quite impossible to meet ever-increasing rate demands.

Warning signals have been sounding for some time, but do not, as yet, appear to have been heard in Town Halls.

I respectfully suggest that local Councillors - of whatever political persuasion - give urgent attention to the formulation of a scheme to enable a more equitable distribution of the rate burden. Surely it is not unreasonable to expect that all adult wage-earners be required to contribute to the cost of services provided in the area in which they live? The pernicious system whereby a few pay for the many is grossly unfair.

A re-appraisal of the system of social hand-outs - increasingly open to abuse - and drastic cuts in housing subsidies would be considered a really "essential service" by many hard-pressed ratepayers.

It is my earnest hope that members of this Association will attend, in large numbers, the A.G.M. on April 29th, and instruct the newly-elected Committee to press for rate economies and for a change in the system of rate-levying.

WE CANNOT GO ON AT THIS RATE !

The Chairman.

MOTTINGHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
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The Society has mapped out a varied programme of activities for 1975 including our annual trip to Wisley which will take place this year in July. Before that, however, we have Mottingham Week. The Society's SUMMER SHOW will be held as part of the Mottingham Week activities on Saturday, 21st June, 1975. May we invite your support as an exhibitor or or spectator (or both) to that event?

We hope that we will have plenty to interest people of all shades of horticultural prowess. Please come along.

LIBRARY SEAT
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We under-estimated the destructive ability of our local vandals - the plaque on the back of the recently presented library seat being ripped off, despite the use of vandal-proof screws.

We are indebted to a member who refuses to be beaten" (he wishes to remain anonymous), for the metal replacement of the plaque.

MOTTINGHAM STATION CAR PARK
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For many years your Association has pressed for an extension of the station car park to relieve parking in the surrounding streets, and planning permission for this was granted last year by Greenwich Borough Council.

We are now informed that British Rail have withdrawn the submitted scheme as a result of legal difficulties involving a tenant in Court Road.

We are assured that other possibilities are being examined.

NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCILS
=====

The Department of Environment has issued a nine-page "consultation paper" on the proposition that "statutory status be made available to neighbourhood councils ..."

We are affiliated to the Bromley Residents' Federation (representing twenty-nine Associations), and we quote the Chairman of that Federation:-

"The more I study the contents of the consultation paper, the more suspicious I am of the motives behind it.

"It is well-known that the majority of residents' associations are non-political; yet four of the eleven bodies to whom the paper was addressed are national political parties. In incredible contrast, NURA, the national residents' and ratepayers' body, is not in the list.

"As to its contents, the paper makes a number of unsupported assumptions. Some of them are of doubtful validity; some are simply contradicted by practical experience.

"It is clear from the suggestions made in the paper that, if the statutory system envisaged is set up, the way will be laid open for the widespread infiltration of residents' and

ratepayers' associations by party politicians; and for local authority officials to exert influence over the way associations are run. By bringing residents' associations within the formal structure of government and politics in this way, they can be rendered tame and ineffective, and deprived of public confidence.

"When you have studied the document further, you may feel as I do, that this so-called consultation paper is one of the most dangerous things to confront the residents' association movement in recent years. You may even think that a general warning needs to be given to residents everywhere to instruct their M.P.s to resist any such legislation tooth and nail."

Having read through this paper, I am in full agreement with the observations of the Chairman of the Federation and am of the opinion that it is yet another attempt to "gag the opposition".

How easy life would become for Local Authorities to be free to "steam-roller" legislation without having to worry about residents' reactions.

The appointment of Councillors and Local Authority officials to run Residents' Associations - and this is one of the many suggestions - would effectively nullify any "watch-dog" role on Council activities.

This pernicious proposal should, and must, be fought.

The Chairman.

126 BUS ROUTE =====

The single-decker buses on this service are to be replaced with new double-decker buses.

We quote Mr. Kenneth Robinson, Chairman of London Transport:-

"Experience has shown that the long single-deckers used on the 126 and other routes are not suitable for London. These buses are too long and drivers have great difficulty in getting them round corners."

We drew attention to this at the inauguration of the service some years ago to London Transport, the Police, and Local Authorities, all of whom replied to the effect that the matter had been fully examined and that they were satisfied as to the viability of the proposal! Rather a costly mistake, would you agree? But then, ten years or so isn't

perhaps too long for a message to get through.

We also drew attention to the traffic congestion that would inevitably be occasioned by the length of time a one-manned bus would be standing in the narrowest section of the shopping centre while fares were being collected.

We recommended a new lay-by outside the Post Office as an alternative.

It has been suggested that the Association run a guess-the-date competition - the winner being the member who gives the nearest date to the announcement by London Transport that a lay-by for 126 buses will be constructed in Court Road to relieve the congestion in Mottingham Road. Proceeds to be devoted to the Mottingham Week of that year.

PRESS COVERAGE

Greenwich Borough Council feel that newspapers are often unfair in the way they report Council news; and we are informed that they intend to appoint a Press Officer to provide a "more meaningful relationship with the Press".

We sincerely hope that local editors will resist any attempt to impose a "muzzle" on reports of Council activity, much of which would remain on the "secret list" were it not for disclosures by the Press and local Associations. Was there not an occasion recently when opposition Councillors were prevented from being present at a Policy Committee meeting?

Your Association will continue to "put you in the picture" with reports of Council legislation on matters affecting the community.

Councillors are elected to serve the community as a whole, and it is incumbent upon them to ensure that all information is made readily available to everyone.

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KEEP A DISCREET WATCH ON THE ELDERLY - THEY MAY NEED HELP

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YESTERDAY'S MILK OUTSIDE MAY MEAN THAT HELP IS NEEDED INSIDE

M O T T I N G H A M W E E K

June 14th - 22nd, 1975

P r o g r a m m e

- Saturday PROCESSION AND GRAND OPENING FETE
 Mottingham Playing Fields from 2 p.m.
- Sunday UNITED OPEN AIR SERVICE. 11.15 a.m. in
 Queens Gardens, Coldharbour
 (If wet, in St. Alban's Church).
- CRICKET MATCH
 Eltham College v. The Gentlemen of Mottingham
 2.30 p.m. at Eltham College
- DISCOTHEQUE
 Evening at St. Andrew's Youth Club
- Monday DRAMA PRODUCTION
 The Mottingham Players in "Wanted ... One Body!"
 7.30 p.m. in the Methodist Hall
- HARPSICHORD CONCERT
 8 p.m. in St. Alban's Church
- Tuesday LECTURE
 "The History of Mottingham" by Ian Murdock
 Evening in Maryfield Hall
- Wednesday OLD PEOPLE'S TEA AND ENTERTAINMENT
 2 p.m. in St. Alban's Hall
- CRICKET MATCH
 Eltham College v. The Clergy of the Diocese
 of Southwark
 2 p.m. at Eltham College
- MUSIC HALL
 Evening at St. Andrew's Hall
- MADRIGAL CONCERT
 8 p.m. at St. Alban's Hall

Thursday FORUM (ANY QUESTIONS)
Evening at Maryfield Hall

MUSIC HALL (second performance)
Evening at St. Andrew's Hall.

Friday SUPPER DANCE
Evening at The Yorkshire Grey, Eltham.

Saturday GARDEN PARTY AND FETE
2.30 p.m. at Fairmount, Mottingham Lane.

HORTICULTURAL SHOW
Afternoon at St. Andrew's Hall.

SPORTS AFTERNOON
at The Course, Coldharbour.

DANCE
8 p.m. at St. Alban's Hall.

Sunday MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND DANCE
7 p.m. at St. Andrew's Church.

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Other Events during Mottingham Week 1975

Local Art Exhibition in Mottingham Library

Flower Festival in the Churches
(Saturday - Tuesday)

Decorated Shops Competition

Festival Events at all the schools

"Best Front Garden" Competition

Old People's Handicrafts Exhibitions

Baby Show

Beauty Queen

May Queen

(continued ...)

Folk Dancing

Morris Men

For more detailed information, please contact Nick
Bartlett, 13, Court Farm Road, Mottingham.
Tel. 857 7889 (evenings).

For further information, times and tickets, watch
for Programmes, posters and announcements in the
local press.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
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MOTTINGHAM FLORAL ARRANGEMENT SOCIETY:

Members meet on the THIRD WEDNESDAY of each month from 8 p.m.
to 10 p.m. at St. Andrew's Church Hall, Court Road, for
lectures and demonstrations by qualified demonstrators.
Further information available from the Secretary:
Mrs. J. Chadwick, 11 Court Farm Road, S.E. 9.

MOTTINGHAM AFTERNOON TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD:

The Guild welcomes new members to their meetings held on the
FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month at St. Andrew's Church Hall,
Court Road. Further particulars available from the
Secretary: Mrs. A. Reeves, 10 Hevercroft, S.E. 9.

If you have any announcements about a local activity
that you would like included in the next Newsletter, please
contact your nearest Officer or Committee member.

All other correspondence should be addressed to:-

The Hon. Secretary,
Mottingham Residents' Association,
55, Leysdown Road,
Mottingham, S.E.9 3ND.