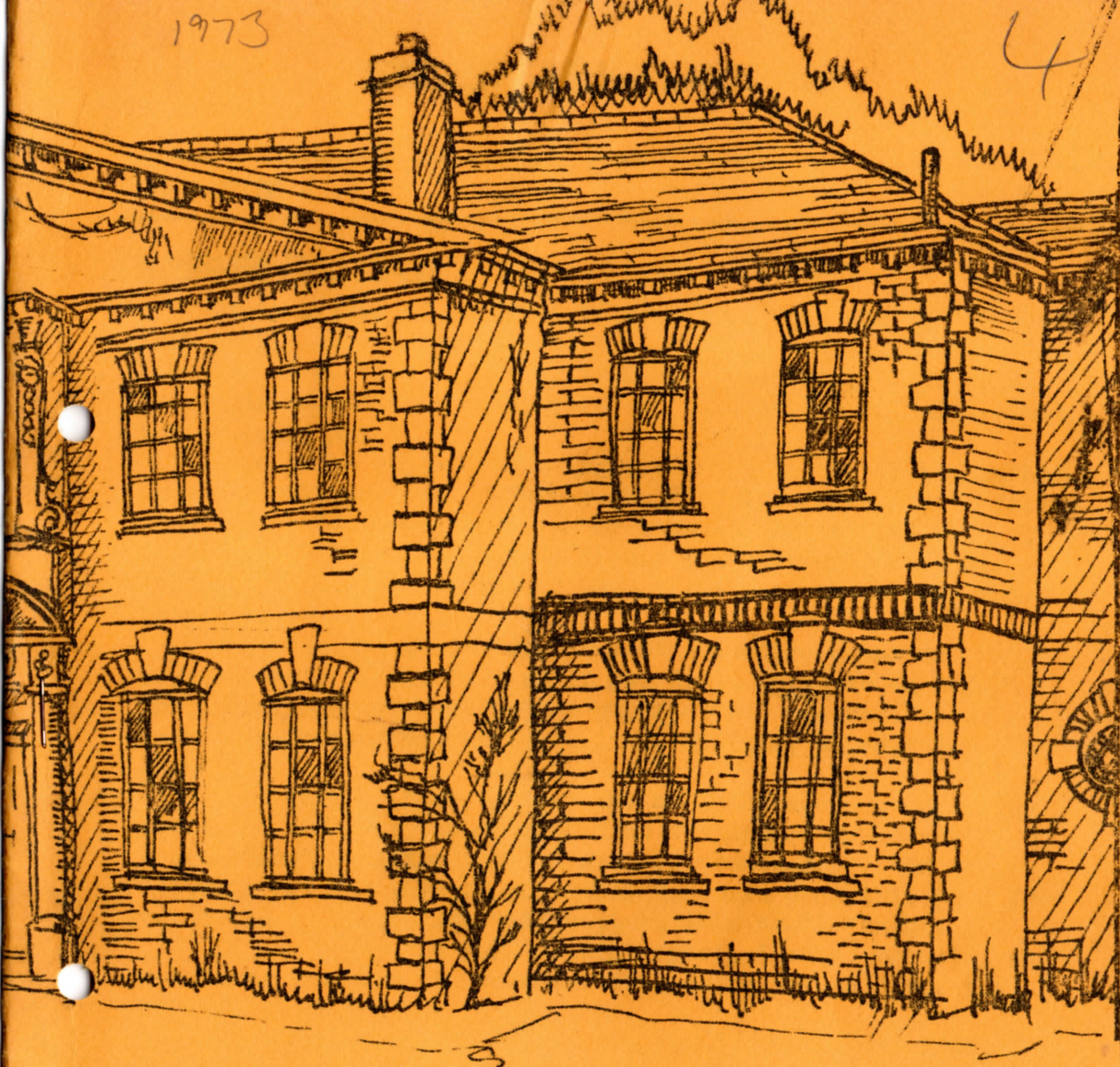


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MOTTINGHAM NEWS

This is YOUR Association

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

It is always of interest to speculate upon the way or ways that people use to communicate and learn. How much notice does any of us take of the written word when many of us read thousands each day in newspapers, in our work or on multi-sheet poster hoardings ?

Some of us enjoy expressing ourselves in the spoken rather than the written word. Perhaps we find things easier to follow if we are told the message rather than having to read it. I find that illustrations of difficult concepts are the most helpful. (Perhaps we should have illustrations in our "Newsletter").

Whatever you think is your most effective means of expression, I should be glad if you would write to me before the Annual General Meeting and express what you feel about living in Motttingham, what you like, dislike, or what you want changed.

This year we hope to drop the word "Ratepayers" from our title, so changing the name to "The Motttingham Residents' Association". After all, we are all "residents", and the majority are ratepayers, so really we could drop this word from our title. I hope you will support this small change.

If you enjoy the small social event, I hope you will, as residents, support the various items being arranged for the MOTTINGHAM WEEK later in the year.

I am waiting to hear from you at 23, Grove Park Road. I will tell you the general concensus of opinion at the Annual General Meeting. I'm not a betting man, but I don't expect anyone wants to change anything. Am I going to be wrong ? I'll tell you when I see you on the 15th May.

D. LYNTON PORTER,

President

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.

MEMBERSHIP:

We are pleased to report that Membership has again increased. We are fortunate in having Peg Cambridge co-ordinating the splendid efforts of our Road Representatives.

Despite rising costs, your Committee will recommend that the Annual Subscription remains at 15 p. The recommendation requires your endorsement at the Annual General Meeting.

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

NEWS:

VANDALISM:

We invited the Bromley Council Director of Parks and Open Spaces to attend a meeting of residents living in the vicinity of King George V Recreation Ground. The opportunity to hear complaints of vandalism and to observe the deterioration of the Recreation Ground would, we considered, be preferable to lengthy correspondence.

The invitation was declined !

Hearing that the Parks Committee were re-considering the question of re-fencing the Chislehurst & Sidcup Sports-ground, we again requested that the King George V fencing be re-instated.

To date, we have no reply.

From experience, we know that the "wheels grind exceedingly slow" at Bromley. Is it possible that in this case "no news is good news" ?

ROAD SAFETY

GREENWICH

The London Borough of Greenwich will again be holding motor cycle training courses throughout the year. These courses are really essential for the beginner. To enrol, please contact the Road Safety Officer at the Town Hall, Woolwich.

Our Road Safety Officer attends the London Borough of Greenwich, Eltham Road Safety Advisory Committee meetings. If there is any point you wish to raise concerning road safety, defective paving, lighting or obstruction, please contact Mr. Reg Cambridge at 857 1291.

BROMLEY

We are pleased to report that since the completion of the War Memorial Roundabout, this hitherto dangerous junction has been accident-free. There can be little doubt that an improvement has been effected, and we trust that critics - few in number - will eventually agree with us that the safety of the individual is of far greater importance than the preservation of the "olde worlde" appearance of the village.

We wholeheartedly agree with the local resident who criticised the barrier erected by Bromley Council to prevent the parking of cars on the pavement outside "The Porcupine". While not aesthetically pleasant to behold, the "row of soldiers" is certainly effective. It is a pity that Messrs. Courage declined our invitation to erect a barrier in keeping with the general appearance of the property.

The extension of yellow parking restriction lines in West Park has been approved by Greenwich Borough Council, but is subject to over-riding approval by the G.L.C.

We suggested to London Transport that the re-location of the 126 Bus Stop in Mottingham Road to a lay-by constructed outside the Post Office in Court Road would improve the traffic flow through the village.

They agree that the present site is not ideal, but that the proposed site in Court Road might occasion fresh traffic problems.

The problem is being given further consideration.

HOME SAFETY: The Casualty Wards of Farnborough and Beckenham Hospitals have been closed. The Panel convened to examine

the economics and efficiency of the existing system arrived at the conclusion that a centrally disposed Accident Centre, staffed by experts, would be able to provide a considerably improved service.

Over 1,000 patients were admitted during the first eight days.

Generally, patients admitted remain in care for three days, after which they are either transferred to a hospital near their home or placed under care of their own doctor.

It is now possible to call for an ambulance under the 999 dialling system in the event of an accident occurring at home. This is subject to not having been able to contact your own doctor.

Residents' Associations are urging the Government to extend Improvement Grants to cover the re-wiring of old property. Defective wiring is a major hazard and should, therefore, be subject to grant.

SIR ROBERT GIFFERY HOMES SITE:

We are not in a position to state when the "battle" between Bromley Council and the G.L.C. will be resolved, and will deal with this at length in our next issue, by which time decisions should have been finalised.

"MOTTINGHAM NEWS":

We report with very much regret the resignation of Mr. Richard Porter as Chairman of the Publicity Sub-Committee.

Richard has devoted a considerable amount of time and effort in the preparation of "The Mottingham News", and we are indeed grateful for his contribution.

ARE YOU A GOOD NEIGHBOUR ?

Is there an elderly person living alone in your road, confined to the house by age or infirmity ? If this should be so, we would ask you to consider for a moment the problems involved. Unable to get to the shops, unable to post a letter - to mention just two. We would like to think that all elderly people have a GOOD NEIGHBOUR prepared to call in occasionally, undertake to do the odd bit of shopping, etc. Should you not wish to become involved to this extent, it would be re-assuring to know that somebody is, at least, keeping an

eye on things generally. Are the curtains still drawn? Is there more than one bottle of milk on the step? Local Authorities and organisations do a great deal for the elderly, but day-to-day contact is virtually impossible. The following quotations are from National Newspapers:-

"Twenty thousand old people may die this winter and some of them won't be found until weeks after they have died because it was nobody's business to keep a friendly eye on them".

"When elderly people die alone and aren't found for days, their neighbours find themselves branded as callous. Should this not be considered to some degree the result of the isolation imposed by standards of modern living?"

The personal approach means a great deal to elderly people living alone: ARE YOU A GOOD NEIGHBOUR?

The London Borough of Bromley have recently reprinted their Information Handbook and Services For The Elderly leaflet, which is available on request from the Information Office, Town Halls or Libraries. The Services For The Handicapped leaflet is being reprinted and will be available shortly.

MOTORWAYS:

At long last the report of the LAYFIELD PANEL OF ENQUIRY into the Greater London Development Plan has been published. It is in two volumes, and at £5 for each it is unlikely to become a "Best seller". The Report is on view at the Town Hall, Bromley, and at the Town Hall, 41/43 Wellington Street, Woolwich.

The Panel's basic recommendation was that Ringway I, otherwise known as the "Inner Box", should be completed, and the radial roads continued to join it. These include the A (M) 20 which the G.L.C. plan to be constructed alongside the A 20, which would have resulted in the destruction of about 450 high-quality houses in Mottingham and New Eltham.

The section of Ringway 2 from Falconwood to the Dutch House would have been retained, and the Panel proposed a new motorway along the line of the railway to Hither Green and St. John's to link up with Ringway I.

Instead of a motorway across Blackheath, the Panel proposed a link through Deptford, under the Thames, joining with the East Cross route under construction north of the Blackwall Tunnel.

The future of the Dover Radial was left up in the air, and those who live on the Rochester Way or the Blighted route of the

proposed Dover Radial have no relief in the foreseeable future.

For the time being, members of the public with questions to raise on the Panel's findings are requested to write to the Council, when they will be answered in due course.

The statement from the Secretary of State for the Environment which accompanied the Panel's Report explained that the Government was not committed to any of the specific modifications the Enquiry Panel proposed and the L.M.A.G. was seriously pressing for a further full enquiry into the plan proposed at the end of last year by Mr. Brewer, since this was an entirely new proposal which was not considered by the Layfield Panel.

The Chairman of the L.M.A.G., the Rt. Hon. Douglas Jay, M.P. was endeavouring to bring a small deputation representing this Group, the London Amenity & Transport Association, Camden, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Lewisham Borough Councils, to put their views on the situation before the Rt. Hon. Geoffrey Rippon, M.P. Secretary of State for the Environment, with a view to getting proper consideration and investigation of the Brewer proposals.

To add further confusion, the Labour Party elected to power at the G.L.C. in April have declared publicly that they will drop all motorway proposals, but cleverly do not indicate their precise ideas for dealing with the traffic congestion in London.

Not even with the impetus of an irate Prime Minister caught in a traffic jam in Whitehall is there likely to be an early decision on which roads are going to be built where !

The L.M.A.G. will be meeting shortly to take stock of the present situation under the new G.L.C. and to decide on the Group's future activities.

MOTTINGHAM WEEK: 16th JUNE - 24th JUNE:

The idea of holding a "WEEK" in which the whole community can take part has been well received by many organisations and individuals in the Mottingham area.

The aim of the Week is to involve as many of you as possible and to provide an opportunity of enjoyment at a series of social events. The organisers hope to highlight the activities of the many groups and organisations which contribute to the life of our community, and put Mottingham well and truly on the map. Mottingham has an identity and life of its own, and many of us think it is a delightful

place in which to live. No one individual or organisation will dominate the Week, which will only be a success if everyone takes part.

Here is an outline of the Programme arranged to date:-

- Saturday 16th June: SUMMER FETE (Probable venue Mottingham Playing Fields). All organisations are asked to provide stalls, side-shows, etc.
- Sunday 17th June: FESTIVAL SERVICES at all local churches.
2 p.m.: CRICKET MATCH at the Y.M.C.A. Ground, Grove Park Road, between two Mottingham XIs.
- Monday 18th June ... A week of Exhibitions, Displays, Open Days at Mottingham schools, youth centres, play-groups, Library and Station. Shops and public buildings to be decorated.
- Tuesday 19th June: "ANY QUESTIONS?" - A FORUM on Local Affairs. On the Panel, our Local M.P. and Councillors.
- Friday 22nd June: A DINNER DANCE at "The Yorkshire Grey".
FLOWER FESTIVALS in the local churches.
- Saturday 23rd June: MOTTINGHAM HORTICULTURAL SUMMER SHOW, St. Andrew's church hall.
- Sunday 24th June: 6.30 p.m.: CONCERT in St. Andrew's Church, including a first performance of a specially commissioned work.

There are plans to produce SOUVENIR BROCHURES for the occasion. The B.B.C. Local Radio hope to cover the Week in various programmes. The Boroughs of Greenwich and Bromley have promised to help in any way possible. But all this is only a start. We need YOU and your ideas and your participation if the Week is to be a success. If you have ideas, or wish to offer your help, please contact the Rector of St. Andrew's, the Rev. Chris Byers, at 233, Court Road, Tel. 857 1691. He will be glad to hear from you.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Your Committee fully support "Mottingham Week" and have donated £25 towards expenses.

Our President has accepted an invitation to "Take the Chair" at the Forum on Local Affairs on the 19th June.

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PART III

As the end of the 19th century drew near, the outward spread of settlement from London began to have a noticeable effect on the structure and composition of the community in Mottingham, but this was to be only a foretaste of the extensive changes to be made by the "progress" of the 20th century.

The early 19th century Hamlet of Mottingham had developed at the south end of Mottingham Lane; but in the 1880's, development began to take place to the south of the Porcupine Inn. A block of five shops was erected in 1894 on what was called "The Pavement": older residents may remember some of the shopkeepers: "Hawes" the Greengrocer, "Brasnett" the Draper/Outfitter, "Rastin" the Newsagent/Tobacconist, "Butcher" the Grocer, and "Pollock" the Coal Merchant. Further shops, houses and cottages were built in what is now known as Mottingham Village and further south along Mottingham Road. Court Road was opened in 1877 and this was the most direct route to Eltham and Eltham (later Mottingham) Station; and the junction with Mottingham Road became known as Mottingham Village instead of the Mottingham Lane nucleus.

The development of the railway made the area suitable for the settlement of commuters in what was then "the green fields of Kent". Local builders were aware of this demand, and West Park was developed in 1887 with large houses suitable for people able to employ retainers. The road was first called "West Chislehurst Park", "Chislehurst" being deleted in 1901. Why it was called such or why the "Chislehurst" was dropped, remains a mystery.

The land immediately surrounding the village was still predominantly agricultural; Mottingham Farm in Mottingham Lane, Court Farm, Coldharbour Farm, Chapel Farm and Model Farm behind the Prince of Wales P.H.; but the main roads were gradually being built up.

In 1900, the village assumed a festive appearance for the visit of the Prince of Wales to the Royal Naval School (now Eltham College). This was a great event for the local inhabitants, and the Parish Council opened a public subscription fund to decorate the route and village. The sum of £80 was collected, and decorations were purchased and erected through

the village and along Mottingham Lane - the Prince's route by carriage from London. A few days before the event, the Parish Council learnt to their dismay that the Prince was to travel by train to Eltham Station and thence by carriage via Court Road. The Council appealed to the Prince, explaining the arrangements made, and he graciously agreed to arrive at the railway station as planned, then by carriage up Court Road to Eltham Church, down Eltham Hill and up Mottingham Lane to the School. (Mottingham Lane in pre A20 days extended to Eltham Green). The Royal Naval School remained at Mottingham until 1911, when the school was suddenly closed and the pupils dispersed. Why the school should suddenly close is still unexplained. Has anyone any ideas or theories?

The buildings stood empty for a short period until January 1912, when the site was taken over by Eltham College, a foundation formed at Walthamstow to educate the Sons of Missionaries. After formation at Walthamstow in 1842, the school moved to Mornington Crescent from 1852-57, to Blackheath from 1957-1912, and finally to Mottingham in 1912. The College has been at Mottingham ever since, progressively expanding, and now accommodates over 500 boys.

During 1912, a vacant plot of land totalling 14 acres facing Mottingham High Road was purchased by the Ironmongers Company, and the Georgian-style Sir Robert Geffery's Homes erected. The charity endowing the almshouses was a very old legacy from Sir Robert Geffery dating from 1703. Sir Robert was Master of the Ironmongers' Company in 1667 and 1685, and Lord Mayor of London in 1685. In his Will of 1703, he left the residue of his property to purchase a piece of land and erect an almshouse for poor people providing each with "£6 per annum and 15/- yearly for a gown", the remainder to be invested for the upkeep. In 1712 the Company purchased a site in Kingsland Road, Shoreditch, and erected an almshouse, finally selling the property to the L.C.C. in 1911 and moving to the more spacious property at Mottingham. The original buildings still exist and now house the Geffery Museum, devoted to period room settings and furniture. The buildings at Mottingham were maintained as almshouses for 50 years until 1972, when they were acquired by the Greater London Council for conversion into flats.

World War I inevitably brought about changes in the pattern of village life as women took over the jobs of men in the Forces. The need for women to work at the Woolwich Arsenal led to the first bus service being provided for Mottingham in 1916, from

Woolwich to Penge via Mottingham and Chislehurst. At this time the Army Service Corps set up headquarters in the Grove Park Institution (now Grove Park Hospital), the surrounding fields being used to camp out the troops. Local residents found traffic considerably increased as the A.S.C. brought fleets of Ambulances and Buses to Mottingham to prepare and equip them for active service overseas.

The war of course brought many tragic losses and Mottingham bore its share: of 169 men and boys who enlisted, 41 were never to return, and a public subscription fund was opened for the provision of a War Memorial to honour the fallen. Over £500 of the total cost of £650 was collected from the appeal; and the Memorial, affectionately known by locals as "The Pepperpot" was erected.

In 1920 the army departed from the area and their HQ reverted back to the Grove Park Institution. Mass unemployment was rife at this time, and to alleviate the position, local labour was employed in the construction of an "Arterial Road" through the northern part of Mottingham incorporating part of Mottingham Lane and West Park. This was the Eltham By-Pass, which eventually connected Mottingham by fast roads to the coast.

In 1923, a proposal was put forward by the L.C.C. to extend their tram route from the Eltham Church Terminus down Court Road, along West Park, Grove Park Road and Chinbrook Road to connect up with the Downham Way Tram Terminus. The plan was opposed by the Parish Council partly because there was "already an adequate bus service". I wonder how many of us would raise the same objection fifty years later? The plan never materialised due to change of policy by the L.C.C. and the take-over of the authority by the London Passenger Transport Board (the forerunner of London Transport).

Limited private housing development took place during the 1920's - 30's period. Houses built by the Mottingham Council were let at a rent of 11/6d. per week; but the major influence on the area was the development of Council property on the fields towards Chislehurst. Early in the 1930's, the L.C.C. acquired a total area of 244 acres of farmland and woods at the south end of Mottingham for the construction of a housing estate, to be built in the "Cottage Estate" style, preserving as many existing trees and natural features as possible. Effectively this policy was followed can be seen by the many trees still surviving on the estates; and in many cases, the

original field boundaries can still be traced by following the lines of trees. The estate was built with its own shopping centre and Church: a new parish of St. Edward the Confessor being formed, although, initially, only the Church Hall and Vicarage were constructed due to lack of funds and the Second World War "shelving" of plans. The modern red brick church was finally constructed after extensive fund-raising and consecrated in 1958. The first house on the estate was occupied in 1935, and the subsequent development of 2050 houses and 287 flats had a profound effect upon the area, increasing the population dramatically and tending to destroy the "village" atmosphere.

Whilst development took place on the fields towards Chislehurst, the appearance of the village was being altered by the construction of a block of shops at the junction of Mottingham/Court Roads on the site of the old village sports field.

In 1938, the threat of war became increasingly apparent and local A.R.P. units were formed in readiness. During the ensuing World War, Mottingham suffered considerably from enemy action - summed up in a contemporary newspaper headline: "Bomb Battered Mottingham". Many homes were damaged or destroyed by bombing and land mines: "Brisley's" grocery store was destroyed one night by a high explosive bomb, and a land mine in Leysdown Road damaged the Parish Hall which was crowded with dancers at the time: amazingly, there were no casualties. The worst devastation was caused later in the war when five flying bombs fell within a short period and on a small area, demolishing "Hyde's" Motor Works and shops in Mottingham Road, and damaging the Porcupine, the Bank, the School, and many shops and houses.

With the advent of peace, housing problems arose in the area, and in 1946 the Woolwich Borough Council purchased from the Crown Commissioners over 150 acres of land comprising the Coldharbour Farm lands, for the building of a housing estate. The first house was opened in July, 1947, and in total, over 1700 houses were built. This was the last large-scale unit of agricultural land left in Mottingham; and with its conversion to housing, it ended the era of Mottingham as an agricultural area, which it had been for the previous eleven hundred years.

Thus we have briefly travelled through our local history to the present-day Mottingham we all know and love. The pleasant mixture of low density housing, playing fields, recreation grounds, woods and quiet footpaths that is Mottingham to-day, is probably how most of us would like to think of our neighbourhood; but

what of the future ? With the rapidly increasing demand for housing, undoubtedly many of our open spaces will disappear under bricks and concrete, and the older more interesting property will give way to higher density housing; but hopefully with the increase in local pride and the growth of societies caring about our environment, we may be able to keep development under control and in character with the area, and keep Mottingham a pleasant place in which to live.

..... concluded.

"In the compilation of "A Brief History of Mottingham", I have relied for the more recent information upon the recollections of older residents; and I should like to thank all those local people who loaned material and "assisted from memory". Without their help, this history would not have been possible. I have so far only "scratched the surface", and I should be delighted to hear from anyone willing to help with memories of the area".

IAN G. MURDOCK,
10, Ickleton Road,
Mottingham.

Editor's Note:

We are truly grateful to Ian Murdock for providing this "Brief History" in three Parts, which has entailed much research and preparation.

Thank you, Ian.

We understand that a version of the History will be printed in the Mottingham Week illustrated Brochure.

ANNOUNCEMENTSBROMLEY COUNCILLORS:

Mottingham's two Bromley Councillors - RON HUZARD and ALISTAIR MACDONALD, are continuing their Saturday morning "Surgeries" to deal with local problems. The Surgeries are held every other Saturday morning from 10 a.m. to noon at the Community Centre, Beaconsfield Road.

Forthcoming dates are:- 21st April, 5th May, 19th May and 2nd June

MOTTINGHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOWS:

The THIRD ANNUAL SUMMER SHOW will be held at St. Andrew's Church Hall on Saturday, June 23rd, from 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. This SHOW will form part of "Mottingham Week".

The FIFTEENTH ANNUAL AUTUMN SHOW takes place at Eltham College, Grove Park Road, on Saturday, September 8th, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., by kind permission of the Headmaster and Governors.

Light refreshments are available at both Shows.

THE MOTTINGHAM FLORAL ARRANGEMENT SOCIETY who will be displaying their art at the Autumn Show, meet on the third Wednesday of every month at St. Andrew's Church Hall. Visitors are always welcome.

WELCOME TO CITIZENSHIP:

The London Borough of Bromley are holding a "Welcome to Citizenship" Function at Bromley Town Hall on May 9th and 10th. The function is organised for the purpose of introducing young voters, coming on to the Register for the first time, to Local Government; and will take the form of a welcome by the Mayor in the Council Chamber, followed by a film about Local Government. Refreshments are provided afterwards, when the young voters will be able to discuss Council services with Members and Officers.

This year the Council are also arranging a COMPETITION divided into three classes: writing, painting and photography,

with a money prize for the winner in each Class. The subject is "Local Government Services", and young voters are invited to submit entries prior to the Welcome to Citizenship Function, at which prize winners will be announced.

Parents are asked to encourage sons and daughters aged between $16\frac{1}{2}$ and 18 to attend the function. The Competition will be limited to those shown on the Register of Electors as becoming 18 on or before the 15th February, 1974, and a personal invitation will be sent to them.

ELTHAM COLLEGE:

A Grand MIDSUMMER FAIR is being held in the grounds of Eltham College, Grove Park Road, on SATURDAY, JULY 7th, opening at 2.30 p.m., to raise funds for the planned building extensions to the school. There will be Stalls offering a wide range of goods, Competitions, Side-Shows, Entertainments, Refreshments, and many special attractions including Veteran Cars: in fact, something for everyone.

In order to provide funds for organising the Fair, a GRAND WATCH COMPETITION is now in progress: a wrist-watch has been wound to the full and sealed in a box (on January 12th last). The box will be opened during the Fair, and the time shown by the wrist-watch when it stopped will be the winning time. Competitors are invited to buy periods of time; and the winning competitor will have bought the "second" which is nearest to the time shown on the watch. First prize is a COLOUR TELEVISION SET, with eleven other attractive prizes. Those interested in taking part in this competition are invited to apply to Mrs. Gardner at 55, Leysdown Road (857 6654), who will be happy to enrol you. Each "second" costs 2p, while an hour can be bought for £1.

(Editor's Note: Your Committee hope that as many members as possible will support this fund-raising venture for extensions to the College, which is very much a part of the Mottingham "scene").

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