

The Croxley Green RESIDENT

Published by

CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

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Editor: Sue Stagg

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★ ★ ★

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

"Courtesy costs nothing". Some of our old adages are still worth some attention even if it is now 1984.

One of my daughters has recently replied to many advertisements and attended many interviews seeking, like so many other young people, employment in these days of supply exceeding demand. Perhaps the most discouraging aspect has been that a number of advertisers have not even bothered to reply to her application, though the discourtesy of those who promised, at interview, to advise in a specified time and then failed to do so is, in my view, totally unacceptable.

Having grown up in an old fashioned family, where "manners maketh man" was reinforced with short, sharp retribution for non-compliance, I find this incomprehensible.

Recently I attended a class reunion of my old school. One of my old colleagues, whom I had not seen for 34 years, said during the evening that whilst our education may not have been top-flight academically, in the skills of life it was without equal. Everyone present, two thirds of the original class, appeared to have risen to some account in their chosen trade or profession. Is this not significant?

The courtesy which we receive from Three Rivers District Council officers is I am sure due to the courtesy we pay them in our communications. Please and Thank you are not obsolete words but the very centre of all social and, dare I say, business intercourse.

An old fashioned plea, but still relevant today. Let us never forget "Courtesy costs nothing".

John T. Hedges

EDITORIAL

The enclosed articles have nearly all been written in 1984. While people still care enough to work on behalf of the community and its environment, and thus for each other, there is hope for us all, unlike the black days predicted by Orwell.

* * *

The articles this time often express strong feelings by their authors — politics has crept in once or twice but this has become an inescapable fact of life. At least the views within are from both sides of the fence and balance each other, party-wise at least.

* * *

I am again grateful to my contributors and distributors for the time they have spent on our behalf. Polly Burdis wishes to thank those who volunteered as subscription collectors after last Autumn's appeal. She still needs more volunteers. With the fine weather coming, what better way to meet those new neighbours and the people round the corner?

Opinion seems to be in favour of retaining the "Resident" in its present form, despite high costs. Our advertisers help us a great deal but we need the subscriptions to make up the balance. Do phone Polly at Rickmansworth 770599 if you can help.

* * *

After six months without a Treasurer, we have gratefully accepted the services of Bob Boardman, one of our vice-presidents and no stranger to Croxley life. Bob will be a valuable member of the Committee in other ways.

* * *

Will you be coming to our AGM on Friday, 30th March? Does the possibility of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Croxley Green interest you? Come and hear all about it.

Sue Stagg

DEREK THOMPSON

Through the medium of this newsletter I would like to express our thanks to a faithful servant of our association. Derek has served on our committee for some years and never failed to respond to a need. He first, despite no previous experience, stepped into the breach when a previous secretary resigned at an hour's notice. His work on our behalf was prompt and effective. Pressure of work made him resign but later when need arose he volunteered and became Minute Secretary, again bringing his enthusiasm to bear. Pressures at home and work have again forced him to resign

Please send letters, contributions and advertisements to:

Mrs. S. Stagg
83, Links Way,
Croxley Green, Herts.
Telephone: Watford 35059.
by August 31st, if possible.

CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

The
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the above Association

will be held at

THE LIBRARY, BARTON WAY

on

FRIDAY, MARCH 30th, at 8.00 p.m.

A member of the Police Force will be talking about

"Neighbourhood Watch"

and we shall miss him greatly. Thank you Derek and your wife Rita for all your work for us, and we are grateful for your continued contact as distributors.

John T. Hedges

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bob Hampson's article in the last issue about library fines initiated two replies which appear below.

From Ralph Lynn, Librarian, Croxley Green Branch Library 1-12-83

Thank you about your kind comments about the library service provided at Croxley Green. I should like to reply to the points of concern raised with a view to clarifying the situation.

First overdue reminders are sent to readers four to five weeks after the date due for return. This period has been determined by an examination of general practice, and in consideration of the relative postal and staff costs involved. Obviously the earlier the reminders are sent, the greater the number will be, and without the provision of extra staff time it is not feasible to send overdue reminders as shorter intervals.

As far as discovering outstanding books on loan is concerned, all library issue systems are designed for quick transactions which link the books borrowed with the borrower, but no system can provide this information on demand with ease. I can only suggest that readers with what you describe as 'nasty, sneaking feelings' come and have a word with me to see if anything can be done.

Finally, your article is correct in allocating the responsibility for the level of fines to the County Council. The decision is actually taken by members of the Cultural and Recreational Facilities Committee, who in recent years have continually faced the thankless task of trying to reduce expenditure. Their present rationale is that, faced with the possibility of closing libraries or cutting bookfunds, the introduction of such fines is the least harmful option open to them, particularly as fines need not be incurred.

Senior library staff have authority to exercise discretion in certain situations and I can only suggest that readers ask to see the Librarian in charge in cases of personal or financial difficulty.

Perhaps this would be a convenient time to draw the attention of your readers to the existence of the Rick-

*Happy is the man who
delights in doing God's
commands.*

Psalm 112, verse 1.

You are invited to worship at the

Baptist Church, Baldwins Lane

Morning Worship: 9.30 a.m.
Family Service: 11.00 a.m. Rev. Derek Fraser, B.D.
Evening Praise: 6.30 p.m. Telephone: Watford 31403

mansworth Local Library Committee (Chairman: County Councillor A.H. Witney, 18 Nightingale Road, Rickmansworth. Telephone: 775195). This is a sub-committee of the Cultural and Recreational Facilities Committee, and is responsible for the local library service in both Croxley Green and Rickmansworth. A list of members is displayed in both libraries.

**Yours sincerely
Ralph Lynn**

**From County Councillor Alan Witney,
Chairman of the Rickmansworth Local
Library Committee. 21-12-83**

I have today been sent copies both of Bob Hampson's letter in "The Croxley Green Resident" about Croxley Green Library and of the Librarian Ralph Lynn's answer to this, in which he gives my name (and address) as Chairman of the Local Library Committee, and also a "Local" County Councillor.

May I therefore be allowed to thank you for publishing Mr Hampson's appreciation of the "service" provided by the Croxley Library, and of your allowing Mr. Lynn to reply? I would be grateful, however, if you would be kind enough to let this letter of mine also appear in your next issue — before I get inundated with letters and 'phone calls about the swingeing fines the County is now imposing upon old age pensioners and young children who bring books back late.

Early this year, when the full County Council was approving its 1983/84 Budget, following the meeting of the Cultural and Recreational Facilities Committee on January 25, I moved an amendment in these terms:

"Exemption from fines for old age pensioners on the display of a supplementary pension book, and for children, shall continue". This was defeated by 27 votes to 38. Subsequently, on being appointed to the Cultural and Recreational Committee itself, at my first meeting last October I raised the issue at length, saying amongst other things that this measure would weigh heavily on some elderly people with few

pleasures and few means, and also be counter-productive in "turning-off" children (whom we all wish to encourage in reading) because their parents get heavily fined.

Some hundreds of letters to Mr. Broome, Hertfordshire's Chief Librarian, have supported my point of view in this; so also does our own Library Committee, who feel that a moderate fine of, say, 50p would be in order for lateness, but that £2 is a monstrous imposition.

Our majority at County Hall wish loyally to support the "cuts" imposed all round by central Government — and this is only one small example (social services and education afford others!). However, I detect also a more punitive "Victorian" view in this matter — emotional rather than reasonable or merely financial. (After all, it can only be a *guess* that £10,000 will be saved over the County by this measure).

Perhaps Croxley residents would do better to protest not to me (or to County Councillor Jack Vosper, who receives a copy of this letter), but direct to Iris Tarry, Chairman of the Cultural and Recreational Facilities Committee, at County Hall.

Yours sincerely

Alan Witney

Registered Office:
8 The Byeway
Rickmansworth
Hertfordshire
WD3 1JW

Dear Mrs. Stagg 10th February, 1984

THE CHESS VALLEY SERVICES

A group originally known as the Chorleywood Christian Businessmen's Initiative was formed in late 1981 drawing its membership from a number of Churches in the Rickmansworth and Chorleywood areas. The group's objects included practical help with a Youth Opportunity Scheme (Y.O.P.) giving work experience to a dozen or so local young unemployed people.

The group now hopes to extend this help by trying to find regular employment for young ex-Y.O.P. people and

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others through a non-profit making Neighbourhood Co-operative which has been registered under the Friendly Societies Act as The Chess Valley Services.

It is envisaged that the young persons could be found work such as general decorating and building maintenance and gardening.

Administration of the Co-operative would be largely by unpaid volunteers, but it will be necessary to pay a working supervisor. It may take two or three months before the project becomes self-supporting and meanwhile funds are needed to provide the initial capital and running costs.

I am therefore taking the liberty of writing to see if you would care to offer your financial support to the project. Any contributions would be most gratefully received at the above Registered Office of the Co-operative.

Thank you in anticipation

Yours sincerely
John Smith
Hon. Chairman

David Carter
Hon. Secretary
The Chess Valley Services

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Well my typewriter has certainly earned its keep in recent months and I'm still keeping the Tipp-Ex firm in business. In case you wonder what on earth we talk about in Committee meetings I will try to bring you up to date with some of the issues raised, action taken by us and results be they negative or positive.

We have been keeping a close watch on the DRG site and work on the River Gade at Cassiobridge and it is nice to see the mound has been planted at the mill site. We are pleased that Marconi are taking the site.

Residents may have noticed that the LT tip has also been fenced and planted and will in time most probably look

better than the adjacent Long Valley Woods which local residents seem to regard as one big rubbish tip. Not to mention the glue sniffers and motorcyclists who seem to be spreading in the area — but that's another story.

We supported Chandlers Cross Residents Association in the efforts to stop the Clay Shoot in Harrocks Wood and we are delighted that the shoot has been stopped. We are still pursuing the illegal tree felling which took place in Rousebarn Lane and following a meeting with Watford Borough Council, Three Rivers Council are considering what measures they could take to slow traffic down in Links Way as Watford will not agree to the closure of Rousebarn Lane to through traffic.

You may have noticed the nice even pavement in front of the parade of shops by Frankland Road which was a result of two letters from us to Herts County Council and help from our local County Councillor Mr. J. Vosper. If you have potholes in your road or sections of pavement that need attention please let us or the Council know, Three Rivers are very helpful and we have a very good relationship with them.

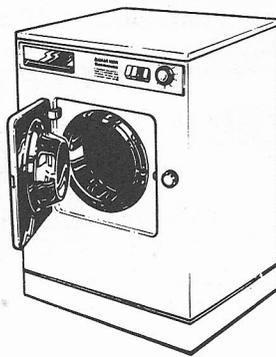
We and Three Rivers Council are still pursuing the matter of the flower sellers at Cassiobridge. We are still trying to get a replacement litter bin at Common Moor Lock so that those people who find empty crisp bags or empty cans too heavy to carry home will have less of an excuse to leave them by the canal or on the moors. We do have a bottle bank in Baldwins Lane and it would be nice if the minority of local residents who do not use it could go and smash their bottles in the bank instead of leaving trails of broken glass in the local open spaces.

Our Association cares about Croxley Green and needs the support of the residents and it would be nice to think that all Croxley Green residents care about the area, but look around next time you go for a walk or drive in the area, some residents obviously care more than others.

Are you in the majority or minority?

J. Bunce

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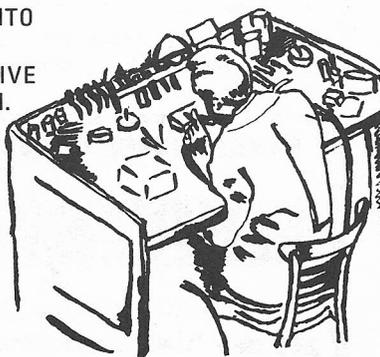
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MILL SITE ACTION GROUP — COMMENT AND REVIEW

COMMENT: We have said elsewhere that with a project of the size and nature of the Croxley Mill development, no matter what decisions are made, they will not be acceptable to all. This is proving to be the pattern of events.

Complementary to this, it ought to be recognised how difficult it is to establish a reasonable balance between the majority and a vociferous minority. Given the differences of approach it is so easy for the view of the latter to prevail simply because of the very nature of their protestations. We do not live in an ideal world and have to try to obtain a generally acceptable level of compromise for any given circumstance.

Those whom we elect to safeguard our interests will not always be perceptive to minority opinion against what

they see to be in the interest of the Community at large. This may sometimes be to the detriment of those most immediately affected.

Even though we did not obtain our modified objectives it is hoped that in the medium to long term the result of the deliberations concerning the Marconi development will prove to be a better alternative than that which could so easily have arisen from the type of alternative development previously anticipated.

REVIEW: As is now well known, the Council's Planning Committee rejected Marconi's original outline application, on the basis of the substantial deviation from the guideline height of 10 metres maximum following negotiation and discussion, outline approval has now been given to amended proposals.

The Action Group was involved in these intermediate discussions. Following a meeting with representatives of Marconi, it was felt that a consensus for modification of our original objection to the proposed building height of 14.5 metres could be made.

It subsequently transpired that at the Planning Committee meeting on 17th November 1983, after consultation with interested parties and a consideration of our views, outline approval was given related to a main building height of 11.75 metres measured FROM THE LEVEL OF THE CONCRETE EDGE OF THE CANAL BANK. This is some TWO METRES HIGHER than the ground base of the site which we had referred to as the datum point.

Whether or not intended, it appears that this approval will, as worded, permit construction of a main building height somewhat IN EXCESS OF that of the original outline application made. Presumably, the height of the service cores will be correspondingly extended!

Whilst recognising that the Development Brief is not legally binding, it was produced as a statement of aims and objectives following extensive public consultation. It therefore represents an official declaration of the parameters that would best serve the Community at large, with due cognizance of the local amenities and the living environment of those in close proximity to the redevelopment.

To confirm by rejection of the original planning application the recommended height limit and then to INCREASE substantially and apparently gratuitously the excess height sought by the applicant — WITHOUT FURTHER PUBLIC DISCUSSION — leaves one to wonder whether the initial public discussion and resultant Planning Brief did not contain a substantial element of window dressing!

It is to be hoped that other aspects of the Planning Brief will not be sacrificed to expediency in the same manner. It should be noted that the legally binding 'Section 52' Agreement, made between the Developers and the Local Authority, makes provision for subse-

quent application to be made for variation of the Schedule of Conditions attaching to the Agreement.

An apparent and somewhat disturbing facet of this chronology — and one which we wish to be disproved — is that whilst negotiations were seen to be taking place a decision may already have been taken in closed session of the Planning Committee meeting. Following rejection of the original application in public session, were ways found to reverse that decision? Would the minutes of that closed session stand public scrutiny and emerge unblemished?

THE FUTURE: The question of site access roads continues to be of concern. Although we had hoped to establish a joint approach for the Mill Site and the Watford Business Park, the "Holywell Industrial Association" prefers to go it alone whilst maintaining a close liaison.

This aspect, together with matters arising from the remainder of the development within TRDC boundaries and

the adjacent developments within Watford Borough boundaries alongside the canal, require increasing vigilance.

With this in mind, your Residents' Association and the Action Group have formed a joint task-force to watch these matters in particular and the overall situation in general — this will facilitate a quick and flexible response to any situation arising.

Of the old Mill Site itself, detailed planning applications will follow. These will need careful scrutiny and comment where appropriate, and this is in your hands!

Finally, the developers have agreed in principle to establish on-site liaison in an effort to minimise problems arising during the construction phase. When established it is hoped that this facility will be utilised in a constructive and responsible manner, as to do otherwise risks losing any willingness to co-operate.

Ronald Garrett
Chairman, Mill Site Action Group

R. J. COLE

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NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

This was the topic of discussion at the Three Rivers Police Consultative Committee which met at St. Mary's Church Hall on 7th February. As you may have read, Moor Park has set up one and the police are keen for other local areas to participate in the scheme which involves members of the public acting as an ex-

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We would like to know if Croxley residents are interested in starting a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and at our AGM, we have arranged for a police representative to come along and explain the scheme in more detail and answer your questions. If you cannot come to the AGM let us know your views anyway. We like to hear from the residents — it's your Association after all!

J. Bunce

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Hugh Thrift
Chairman, Croxley & District
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BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY — OPEN GARDENS 1984

This year the date fixed is Sunday, 1st July, when two gardens in Croxley Green will be open to the public by kindness of their owners. Both the gardens are situated in Little Green Lane — Waterdell House and Coachman's Cottage. There will be various stalls, including homemade cakes and produce, ices, raffle, teas and pony rides. Time: 2.30—6 p.m. All proceeds go to local B.R.C.S. funds. This is a splendid opportunity to visit these beautiful and interesting gardens. Ed.

THE REVELS

As we go to press, the AGM of the Croxley Green Society is held and plans put forward and discussed for this year's Revels to be held on **JUNE 23rd**. It is, however, not too late to volunteer help for the Committee, to book a stall, to offer an arena event or to enter a float in the procession. One of the attractions this year will be a sit-on model railway. Contact me for details. Ed.



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