

The Croxley Green Resident

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

No. 101

Editor—F. NORMAN CHERRILL

APRIL 1969

Spotlight on the Spring

Your Editor, being of the opinion that a Spring number should carry at least some matter of an outdoor nature, has prevailed upon me to suggest some short walks in the immediate vicinity of Croxley Green. Certainly for those for whom the novelty of a ride in the car has worn off and who wish to be away from the weekend traffic infested lanes, there is considerable scope. However, not all are adept at map-reading, and appended are two walks that may be new to some of our readers.

As residents of Rickmansworth Urban District we assist towards the upkeep of Moor Park Mansion but except on Mondays or by appointment, it is not possible to visit the mansion. One can, however, obtain a fine view of the house in its setting from a public right of way. A brief journey by train to Moor Park Station is necessary first, leaving by the exit on the east side of the railway and following the path alongside the line in the direction of Northwood. At the end of Sandy Lodge golf course turn right under the railway, follow the path across two estate roads in succession before joining Bedford Road. Turn left to Batchworth Lane and then right, up the hill to Batchworth Heath. Follow the north side of the heath and immediately beyond The Green Man P.H., turn right into a cul-de-sac. At the first bend, as the road bears right, go ahead along a path between fences. In a short distance the track emerges on to the open hillside and Moor Park golf course. The path follows the hilltop and is way-marked, though somewhat sparsely. Fine views of the Colne Valley are to be had before the path drops down to Moor Lane at Batchworth.

A stretch of the canal towing path to Lot Mead lock, followed by the path to Croxley Hall Wood is the obvious way back to our starting point and provides an opportunity for a near view of the historic Tithe Barn at Croxley Hall. Distance approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Our second walk heads for Chorleywood, leaving The Green by Loudwater Lane. After a couple of hundred yards, and shortly after a tarmac drive turning off to the right, one enters a spinney again on the right, through what is now only a hole in the hedge. Two hundred yards more and the trees are left behind. We

now cross a field diagonally to emerge on the Sarratt road at the entrance to "Merlins". The right of way is through the garden surrounding the dwelling and it runs parallel with the road at first and then diagonally to a stile. A further field is crossed and yet another but in this case alongside a hedge. Finally at the fifth stile (adjacent to a pond) cross the large field by walking directly towards the centre electricity pylon of the three then in view. On reaching the far side of the field bear right alongside the hedge to enter the lane alongside Micklefield Hall Park. At the drive to the house turn left for twenty or thirty yards and then right along the path to Solesbridge Lane. From this point a further path runs back to the left diagonally across the same field to end at a kissing gate at the junction of the previously mentioned drive and Sarratt Lane. This lane must be used for about 300 yards but once opposite a house named "Thorpland" a stile gives access to a field path. At the end of the path a few paces more along Sarratt Lane and then turn right into Troutstream Way.

Housing developments have created this diversion and the footpath is resumed by a left turn between the house on the corner of the estate road and its neighbour called "Uptop". This closely fenced track drops to the level of the Chess Valley and joins Loudwater Drive, which is then followed to Loudwater Lane. Bearing left a few yards of tarmac is again necessary, followed by the unmade surface of Chess Lane branching to the right; this gives way to a fenced path which follows the north bank of the River Chess to the meadow below Copthorne Road. A brief ascent to the latter and ahead will be noted what is now but a suburban alleyway leading to Green Lane and to our starting point. Distance four miles.

Many of the paths mentioned above need to be regularly walked if they are not to fall into disuse. This prompts me to conclude with a mention of the mid-week afternoon rambles which take place at nearby Tring where they attract housewives, retired people and those in similar circumstances and perform the twofold function of providing pleasure with recreation.

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NORTH ORBITAL ROAD

The Past. A map of 1924 shows a projected road between King's Langley and Denham to connect the A40 with the A41 roads superseding the A412 through Watford. In a much more comprehensive plan covering Middlesex and S.W. Herts published in 1948 the same project was recommended as a necessity at that time.

In the last twenty years the project is not much nearer reality. Successive Ministers of Transport must be held responsible for not providing the connection from the M1 to the M4 motorways, and the Ministry of Transport are blamed for shelving the 1948 Report.

The Present. The reality of today is that Watford Road is being turned into a railway, carrying as it does a vast volume of heavily loaded vehicles—a majority being long-distance travellers. The services of British Railways might have been (and still could be) strengthened if tons of goods were moved by rail instead of by road. A forceful national policy could still benefit the nation because our problem is not singular.

The immediate future. The route of the N.O.R. from Hunton Bridge to Maple Cross, as decreed by the Ministry of Transport, was published in June, 1968. In a letter from the Eastern Road Construction Unit at Bedford (*we quote*) "... gave rise to considerable objections to the proposals, not the least of these being an objection from the Chorleywood U.D.C. who are regarded as statutory objectors. The holding of a Public Inquiry is necessary and consequently will delay the construction date for this scheme. We cannot hold the Inquiry until a traffic survey for north-west London area has been completed and the Minister has analysed it."

The Public Inquiry must be held within six weeks of its official announcement so that the earliest time could now be in early May.

The delay in holding the Inquiry precipitated a March along the A412 on March 23rd. **It is expected that a public meeting sponsored by a Joint Action Group**

will be held in Watford Town Hall on April 21st.

The Future. Many press reports have led us to believe that a start will be made on the N.O.R. in 1969/70, but it transpires the project is tabled in the 1970 programme which (from a Ministry viewpoint) covers 1970/75—which could be six years hence. So you will see there are considerable grounds for complaint which can only be progressed by UNIFIED ACTION by the residents, the County Council and the local authorities.

What can we do?

It is suggested that any individual or any group of people who belong to any kind of Society or Club should send a written submission advocating the earliest possible construction of the North Orbital Road. Points that can be made might include the difficulty of crossing Watford Road; the hundreds of children who have to cross the road to and from school; the almost incessant passage of heavy vehicles through a residential area; the deterioration of property; and the increasing use of by-roads (such as Links Way, Baldwins Lane and Sarratt Lane) to deviate from the A412. Submissions should be sent to The Inspector, Public Inquiry re North Orbital Road (S.W. Herts), at the Ministry of Transport, St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, London, S.E.1.

CROXLEY GREEN ROADS SAFETY COMMITTEE

Much of the work of the Croxley Green Roads Safety Committee has been taken up with the North Orbital Road, and their recent meeting was an enlarged meeting with representatives from various Residents' Associations, County and local Councillors, and local branches of political parties.

The outcome of the meeting was to develop a Joint Action Group to improve the potential for all interested organisations to take unified action. The Committee intend to be represented at the Public Inquiry. Their Hon. Secretary is Mr. R. T. Willoughby of 50 Gonville Avenue.

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THE WELCOME CLUB

Rickmansworth Council has made a further grant of £100 to the Welcome Club, making a total of £250 for the current year. This is done as a grant to Aged Persons' Organisations, and the Darby and Joan Club in Rickmansworth are given the same sum.

In passing, we recall a report from your Committee Vice-Chairman, Mr. Gardner, who attended the annual meeting of the Welcome Club and was impressed with reports of their activities.

IDENTITY CARDS FOR COUNCIL STAFF

Arrangements have been made so that Council staff who may be required to identify themselves in carrying out their official duties will have an identity card bearing the Common Seal of the Council and specifying the purposes for which entry to premises may be necessary. We are glad to note this innovation which ought to prove useful to elderly people who, in various places, have been the victims of bogus officials.

LEISURE AMENITIES IN THE GADE VALLEY

The Clerk of the Council will attend as an observer a local conference to examine "planning for leisure in the south-east" in relation to the future of the Gade Valley.

ARE THE COUNCIL TURNING WATFORD ROAD INTO A MOTORWAY?

Our roving reporter says he is absolutely amazed at the proliferation of traffic signs nearly big enough to meet motorway standards that have recently appeared along Watford Road. He says it is beyond his comprehension that, when driving through from North Watford there is an almost absence of route signs and he goes on to wonder why one Council does something which a neighbouring Authority does not do. Surely, he concludes, one of them is wrong.

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CASSIO BRIDGES

A recent press release says the work on constructing new bridges over the canal and the river Gade on the A412 at the area boundary of Rickmansworth and Watford Councils, "will start shortly". The report states there is not expected to be any major dislocation of traffic; presumably the County Council mean it will not be worse than at present. A diagrammatic plan was published in the local newspapers, and a scale plan may be seen in the Public Library. The scheme provides for dual carriageway between the new roundabouts to be constructed at the Baldwins Lane junction and the Whippendell Road junction incorporating the C.G.R. & R.A. request that sufficient space be provided for traffic from Watford proceeding up Baldwins Lane.

WHERE AM I?

Two members of your Committee were talking outside the shops at the top of Scots Hill when a van stopped and the driver asked "Which is the way to Croxley Green?" He was surprised to know he had arrived.

This is another example of the need to let drivers know they are passing through Croxley Green, and it is amazing that the Council's Worboy signs mentioned elsewhere fail to give the driver the information he needs.

IMPROVED TRAIN SERVICES

Last September London Transport cut out several trains to and from stations to Amersham, and it is worthy of note that the residents' associations of Amersham, Chesham, Chorleywood and Rickmansworth combined to form an action group which has now succeeded in gaining the restoration of the cuts.

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WE HEAR . . .

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Many readers will surely be amazed to learn that the Croxley Green Horticultural and Allotments' Association will hold their 50th annual show on 13th September. Early notice of the date is given so that everyone who fancies the chance to display his produce may do so.

At the recent A.G.M. of the Society Mr. E. Hampton retired as secretary after seven years' service, and he has been succeeded by Mr. H. J. Dewar, 1 Frankland Close, who will be glad to hear from new members.

NO CLOCK FOR CROXLEY GREEN

Mr. W. A. Carr, whose shop is now well-known in New Road, sought permission to install an illuminated clock outside his premises, but the Planning Committee refused consent. An appeal against the refusal was made and the Minister has dismissed the appeal.

YOU ARE IN DEBT!

Very likely you will probably say "Yes" because it's a fairly common complaint that our ends don't meet. But you may not know that you owe your Council about £900! This figure is an average per member of the population revealed by the Municipal Treasurers' Association. In so far as Rickmansworth Council is concerned their Treasurer estimated a total debt at present of £4,300,000. We realise, of course, that one cannot consider this in isolation to the day-to-day running of a big business using loans and overdrafts in the best possible way.

RATES UP TWOPENCE

In spite of the fact that rates had to rise in the face of increasing costs, it is as well to record that Rickmansworth Council must have had a most difficult task to trim their own requirements against the much greater demands of the County, the Police, and the W.H.M. Drainage Board.

PROPOSED CAR PARK

Those members of the press and public present having left the meeting of the Highways and Traffic Committee meeting on 17th February (simply because the committee decided to consider several items in private), one of the items was a proposal to provide 20 car parking spaces at the rear of Nos. 136 to 148 Watford Road and the Committee were advised that additional land might be required. Without apparently seeking the views of the shops and residents concerned, and certainly depriving your Association of any observations they might wish to make, the Committee approved the scheme and sent an application forward to the County Planning Authority.

Looking at the logic of the situation, the footpath outside these shops is sufficiently wide to allow of a car (and bus) lay-by being provided, yet when this idea has been broached in the past it has been officially said the cost of re-siting pipes and cables would be prohibitive. The point now seems to be that as so many people have cars (and as drivers are getting beyond caring for parking restrictions), they are not likely to be shepherded round the back of the shops just to buy bread or potatoes.

Readers will remember from our last issue of *The Croxley Green Resident* that we tried very hard to advise the Council that their plan for a car park behind New Road was not the best idea, but they, in their wisdom gained County planning permission for what will amount to a car park for the proposed new Youth Club.

CHRISTMAS BOX

All being well Rickmansworth Council plan to allow tenants of council houses a rent free week next December. This arises from the probability of an estimated surplus on the Housing Revenue account for the financial year ending March, 1970.

Please, Mr. Councillors, may all ratepayers be granted a rate-free week as *our* Christmas box?

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THOSE YELLOW LINES

It is all very well having yellow lines to prohibit car parking but what do we do with drivers who ignore the prohibition? This has been the case in Watford Road where lorries have incorrectly stopped. It was certainly the case one recent Saturday afternoon when your Editor noted three cars parked on the yellow line outside the Library. In just the same way drivers deliberately ignore the restrictions in Rickmansworth High Street, where recently an unattended private car was seen outside Smiths.

In order to achieve results which will be in the best interests of the majority, the views of the people (such as societies and organisations) should be made to the Council in writing with the rider that such observations be considered at a Committee meeting when the public are able to attend. Better, however, to have prior consultation on new schemes.

STREET LIGHTING

Last year we were told that the Council would keep the street lamps lit all night until such time as fresh timing controls could be installed to facilitate the lights being off from midnight until 6 a.m. (except for main roads and road junctions). According to a rather loosely worded report of the Highways & Traffic Committee it appears that the maximum cost of £6,250 will cover the purchase of existing time control equipment, new equipment for lamps not fitted with time switches, and reconditioning of some time switches. The County Council will be responsible to reimburse the proportionate cost for county roads.

As lighting up time will cease at 6 a.m. from 1st April we assume the street lamps will only need to be lit from dusk to midnight on district roads as from that date. We shall be watching to see the Council's arrangement at this time to ensure economies in the use of electricity.

THE PRESENT HUMP BRIDGE

It is a little perplexing to note that the local Council has seen fit to erect an illuminated sign approaching Cassio Bridge from Croxley Green warning there is a hump bridge ahead. Soon it will have to be taken down, and what will the Engineer do with a spare hump bridge sign?

LLOYDS BANK

Several comments have been made by residents in New Road concerning the long time which the caravan has been used for Lloyds Bank; they think the time is overdue for the bank to house itself in its still empty home. It is understood that enquiries made to the Council's Surveyor have not resulted in action; the caravan is, of course, sited under strictly limited permission—usually for not more than a year.

HORSE RIDING ON THE GREEN

Complaints are still being received by the Association of dangers and damage attributable to horses being ridden on The Green. In brief, it is said that young people are not competent to control their mount, especially if it took fright; there is no doubt that the unmade footpaths (which used to be pleasant walks) are churned to a quagmire; there is a great deal of truth that pedestrians are being interfered with by horses; that some horse-owners are having the free use of a paddock; and that some horses are being brought to The Green from Watford as well as jumping gear being brought in dad's car.

Very obviously The Green must not be turned into a free for all to do just what they like. Certainly it must be free for all to enjoy. The problem has stood referred to a special panel set up by the R.U.D.C. some eighteen months ago but that panel has not revealed its findings. Chorleywood Council had to cope with this same problem and appears to have achieved success controlled by a bye-law; Watford Council did the same. Yet Rickmansworth Council has failed to benefit from the experience of neighbouring authorities—we hope they will do so with expediency.

PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS

In particular, your Association and the Parochial Church Council of All Saints' Church had to raise with Rickmansworth Council the dilapidation of the notice board outside the Church Hall and queried its ownership. We are pleased to record that this board (and other smaller boards throughout the District) will be maintained under a contract with a company who stick up the notices.

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"THE SECRETIVE SOCIETY"

Admission of Press and Public. A member of the public being present at the (Highways & Traffic Committee) meeting it was RESOLVED:—That the following items contained in the list of business be considered by the Committee in private after other business on the agenda had been transacted. Items:—Scots Hill Improvement, No. 19 Park Road and No. 60 Scots Hill; Cassiobridge improvement—Croxley Estates Ltd.; Rectory Road improvement—Victoria Hotel; fencing for Batchworth Depot Extension.

The foregoing is a copy from the official Minutes of the Highways & Traffic Committee, R.U.D.C., held on 6th January, 1969, which is one of the few committees where members of the public are admitted.

A committee member of your Association who regularly attends meetings of the Highways & Traffic Committee said of the last meeting "it was a waste of time" because the items of importance were classified as not being in the public interest.

The title "The Secretive Society" has been couched from *Rickmansworth Observations* by Mr. Berwydd Davies, who, in turn, was quoting from a book titled "Not in the Public Interest" by David Williams, a lawyer and Oxford don. He says, in his important book, that political leaders, the Civil Service, and local government have acquired a reputation for "habitual secrecy", local authorities "displaying a singular reluctance to have their proceedings publicised".

Lord Devlin has pointed out the danger of the present system in that "it installs as the judges of what ought to be revealed, men whose interest it is to conceal".

And the people who work in local government (Nalgo evidence to the Royal Commission on Local Government) consider that councillors should stop interfering in day-to-day council business and let officials get on with the job.

Think on these things when you are called upon to vote.

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UP GOES THE WATER

The Rickmansworth & Uxbridge Valley Water Co. Ltd. has obtained Ministry approval to increase its domestic charges by 25% from 8d. to 10d. in the £ on your rateable value.

When this matter was raised at a meeting of Chorleywood U.D.C. their Clerk of the Council told them "It's useless to protest". The R.U.V.W.C. is, of course, a public company with a monopoly to whom, it seems, we should advise "Economy is a great revenue". But the question remains "Why should we pay more this year than we did last year?"

THAT DINNER

There is not a shadow of doubt that it is a most deplorable thing for a public body—the West Herts Main Drainage Board—to even contemplate spending £750 of your money on an official Dinner. To do this the authority has increased the Chairman's allowance from £425 to £1,175 p.a. Even the lower sum should be the topic of investigation.

We quote the advice of Mr. E. F. L. Russell (who wrote in the *Watford Observer*) "Magnum vectigal parsimonia est"—"Economy is a great revenue". The same local paper also deprecated the proposal.

We recall there was a public outcry only a year or so ago when the Chief Officer of W.H.M.D.A. was appointed at a salary of £7,000 per annum.

PARKING IN WINTON DRIVE

Rickmansworth Council has asked their Surveyor to keep under review (in concert with the Police) an intention to institute at the earliest opportunity a No Waiting restriction in Winton Drive between its junction with Winton Crescent and Watford Road.

Let it be recorded that your Residents' Association was not consulted in this matter. The views of affected residents and drivers will be welcomed so that known observations can be raised with a Council whose public relations policy is still remote.

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RAILWAYS

A letter from British Railways (London Midland Region).

I can now answer your enquiry regarding the possible link between the Metropolitan and British Rail lines in the Croxley Green area.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to explain the reasoning behind the scheme and the reasons why, I am afraid, it has to be rejected. The proposal has been looked at several times in the past and again quite recently. It would be to divert Metropolitan line trains from Watford (Metropolitan) Station over a new spur at Croxley Green, via Watford West and Watford High Street Stations into Watford Junction. (If the "circular route" referred to in your letter means the running of these trains back to London via the Bakerloo line, this is impractical due to the different tunnel and rolling stock profiles of London Transport's Bakerloo and Metropolitan lines.) The feasibility of a Rickmansworth-Watford Junction service has also been examined. These proposals would replace the existing Watford Junction-Croxley Green service.

Whilst these schemes look attractive at first sight, there are considerable drawbacks. Firstly, the closure of Watford (Metropolitan) station would inconvenience over 60% of the passengers using that station who would

have longer "house to work" throughout journey time. Again, the average journey times of passengers from Croxley L.T. Station into London, changing at Watford Junction or Watford High Street on to B.R. services to Euston or on to Bakerloo line trains, would not be decreased on a "throughout" basis from home to work. These passenger surveys also indicate a comparatively small potential use of the service for local or conectional purposes—certainly not sufficient to justify a Rickmansworth-Watford service.

The benefits obtained must be offset against the costs of the scheme, and these are heavy. The line from Croxley Green to Croxley Green Junction would require to be increased from single to double track. Watford Junction Station would require an increase in capacity to accommodate the Metropolitan line services.

Looking at the "balance sheet" of advantages and disadvantages, the scheme would result in a substantial worsening of the joint financial position of British Rail and London Transport and this loss is not outweighed by the limited "social benefits" which the proposal would bring. In view of this, the proposal cannot be justified and must therefore be declined.

I feel that any further investigation of the scheme over and above that recently undertaken could but come to the same result, and that consequently there is little point in re-opening the latter at this time.

ADVERTISEMENT SPACE

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*To the Hon. Treasurer, at 114 Links Way
(or to any member of the Committee)*

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NO COMMENT

Bernard Braden (on the Braden Beat) quoted from the *Local Government Chronicle* "the Committee were informed that the Establishment Officer is now able to provide a list of staff broken down by age and sex".

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Our congratulations to Mr. J. Fox of Frankland Road who was awarded a medal for twenty years' service in the St. John Ambulance Brigade. To five-year-old Rebecca Saire for gracing *The Echo* with a charming photograph. To David Watkins of Dorrofield Close who won a cycle in a painting competition. And our condolences to Mr. Berwydd Davies (reporter for *Watford Observer*) who slipped on a rough footpath in Rickmansworth.

THE LATE MRS. E. PITKIN

It is with very real regret we place on record a tribute to the late Mrs. E. Pitkin. Many people made a special effort to attend her Memorial Service which crowded All Saints' Church. We are glad to quote Mrs. Fenning of the British Red Cross Society who so aptly described Mrs. Pitkin as "the perfect volunteer".

RICKMANSWORTH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

These will be held on 10th May. There will be one vacancy in Croxley Green North Ward, where Councillor N. C. Young has held the seat for three years, and two vacancies in Croxley Green South Ward where Councillors W. H. Cox and A. W. Hauck have held office during the past three years.

C.G.R. & R.A.

The Croxley Green Residents' and Ratepayers' Association is pleased to publish this magazine quarterly, and ensures that a copy goes in to every house (about 4,500) in Croxley Green irrespective of the householder being a member of the Association. We would like to achieve a 100 per cent membership. The annual subscription for the year to 30th September next is still only 2/-, which covers husband and wife. Expect our collector to call on you soon or kindly direct to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. J. W. Broome at 114 Links Way.

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CHARITY COLLECTIONS

Eighteen charities will be allowed to have street collections during the remainder of this year.

MOOR PARK MANSION

Rickmansworth Council is worried about the large expenditure by them for the upkeep of Moor Park Mansion, and, as the public can visit the Mansion on Mondays only, they are going to review the whole question of this, as well as problems of future costly maintenance.

R.U.D.C. MEETINGS

The public are allowed to attend the following meetings, which commence at 8 p.m. in the Council Offices, Rickmansworth.

Council Meetings—April 29th, May 27th, July 8th.
Highways and Traffic Committee—April 14th, June 16th.

Open Spaces Committee—April 15th, June 17th.

POINTS OF VIEW

Expressions of opinion in this magazine do not necessarily represent the views of the Association's Committee. Comments and matters of local interest will be welcomed by the Editor.

DURRANTS FAIR

The Old Merchant Taylors' Society will hold their Durrants Fair on Saturday, June 28th.

CROXLEY GREEN FLOWER GROUP

Coming arrangements are to be held in the Red Cross Centre on April 8th, May 13th and June 10th. Details may be obtained from Mrs. J. Quick, 3 Scots Hill Close (Tel.: 77434).

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