

The Croxley Green Resident

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

No. 116

Editor — John E. Gell

Winter 1972/73

EDITORIAL

Save Our Community Centre!

Since mention was made in our last issue that Dickinson's Guildhouse was to be put up for sale a flurry of activity has ensued in various quarters.

Basically there is one major problem for the Council in attempting to purchase the building for the community, namely money. Croxley Green Councillors spurred on by pressure from local residents and echoed at our recent A.G.M. have realised that something has to be done quickly if this building is to be saved. However the Council say that they are fully stretched financially at the present time with the Northway car park, town centre redevelopment and the dual purpose swimming pool at William Penn School.

We would suggest to the Council that this time they might spend some money on us instead?! It is felt that many people do not realise how the loss of a building such as this would affect the life of Croxley Green. We can foresee however a great number of complaints from those same people when the building is no longer there and that more had not been done to save it!

The Guildhouse, erected at the turn of the century, was originally built as a social centre for the employees of Croxley Mills who then made up just about all the residents of Croxley Green. Times have, however, changed. Suburbia has grown around us, people with all sorts of diverse occupations have moved in and council area boundaries are becoming larger and more remote and with it there is a great danger of a 'lack of belonging' to a particular area. If the 'centre' of a district is taken from us then this feeling is further accentuated.

Already local organisations are starting to look further afield for suitable venues for their meet-

ings—Croxley Green Camera Club are already installed in the Rickmansworth Hockey Club and a number of other groups are thinking of trying somewhere in Watford. Indeed as the position stands at the moment all users of the Guildhouse have been given until March to find alternative accommodation.

Our latest information (the beginning of January) is that the Council are to make urgent representations to the owners of the Guildhouse to see whether an agreement can be reached for the purchase or acquisition of the building by the Council so that it might rightly become the Community Centre for the people of Croxley Green.

Road closures

Mention is made of proposals by the Council to part close two roads in Croxley Green to traffic i.e. Copthorne Road and Little Green Lane.

This subject often raises some people to fever pitch and long emotive discussions are held by any organisation that is in any way an interested party. 'Should any public road be closed at all', some might ask or 'by closing a road this is giving an aura of selectiveness and privilege' say others. Personally, I think that each case should be dealt with purely on its own merits—road safety being the prime factor. This is certainly the case with these two examples. The constant stream of heavy lorries and cars grinding along purely residential roads never made for the purpose resulting in chaos at each end must surely be controlled in some way.

On the other hand we do have, need one mention it, a heavily overloaded A.412 and at times it is no doubt very tempting for cars and heavy vehicles to find the short cuts. However, what should be our priority—houses or roads?

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PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Little Green Lane

It is proposed to set in motion the procedure necessary to close the section of Little Green Lane between Norwich Way and Lincoln Drive to all traffic except certain agricultural vehicles. The reason for this action is no doubt only too obvious to those parents collecting or dropping their children to and from Little Green Junior and Durrants Schools in the morning and early afternoons.

Local residents have expressed extreme concern at the chaos that ensues and point out that a fatal accident is never far away especially when large lorries try to attempt the sharp right turns from Norwich Way and Lincoln Drive into the lane and thence on into Rousebarn Lane.

WATFORD-CROXLEY GREEN RAILWAY

British Rail have now issued their latest publicity sheet which includes details of main line trains stopping at Junction during the morning and evening rush hours. Leaflets are available at local libraries.

SCOTS HILL HOUSE, SCOTS HILL

Outline planning permission for the erection of ten houses and garages at this site has been refused by the Planning group of the Council on amenity and road safety grounds.

COFFIN SITE (CASSIOBRIDGE PLAY AREA)

As previously reported the Council are to develop this one acre site into a children's playground; £3,000 has been provided for the purpose. It will have a limited amount of playground equipment and would be principally used for light ball games. In view of the close proximity of the main road and canal the area will be surrounded by an 8ft. 0in. high chain link fence. The site will be landscaped.

Apparently the name 'Coffin' is to be heard no more. One of our Councillors raised the matter at the latest meeting of the Council and within the space of exactly one minute—a rather hasty decision we would have thought—the name had disappeared for ever! Indeed, the name was not exactly pleasing to the ear, but the site has been known as 'Coffin' for many years and no objection

has ever been voiced against it as far as we are aware.

MAYFARE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SYCAMORE ROAD

Television personality Clement Freud opened this new Georgian style Estate and showhouse on November 8. Totalling 51 houses in all they have been built on the former goods yard beside Cassio-bridge roundabout. The development comprises three house types—two with four beds, one with three beds. A single garage or garage with car port are included. The layout of the estate has been planned around a series of enclosed garden courtyards which will be landscaped.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our A.G.M. was held on November 10 in the Guildhouse. We were pleased to welcome most of our local R.U.D.C. Councillors who answered members' questions.

It was with regret that our chairman, Mr. W. T. G. Yabsley, resigned from office. During the last six years he has held the post, he commanded great respect from all members of the Committee on account of his great sincerity and fairness and we will all miss his presence at our meetings.

Mr. Norman Cherrill, who surely needs no introduction, was elected in his place. Other recent Committee changes have seen the departure of Mr. T. N. Millway from the district and the inclusion of Mr. T. Lucas of Baldwins Lane and Mr. D. Jarritt of Copthorne Road onto the Committee both of whom are warmly welcomed. Needless to say if any member of the Association would like to serve on the Committee would he or she please contact the Secretary whose address appears on the back page.

PARTIAL VICTORY FOR COPTHORNE ROAD

Access only clause

Members will recall that this Association backed the Copthorne Road residents in their fight to prohibit the use of through traffic from and to Scots Hill when road improvements had been completed.

Back in April 1971, 86 residents of Copthorne Road and three in Milthorne Close (representing 46 properties) submitted a letter to the Council asking for the road to be stopped up at the junction with Scots Hill. Residents were then told that

further consideration would be given when the improvement scheme had been finalised. Since then however it was found that after the new carriageway of Scots Hill had been opened there had been a substantial increase in the number of vehicles travelling along that section of the A.412. This in turn had aggravated the difficulties for those motorists wishing to gain access to the A.412 from the Green, although this situation might be relieved if residents in Copthorne Road and the adjoining roads were able to obtain access to the A.412 without the need to travel via The Green. Conversely, with the Scots Hill improvement, it was emphasised that there should be less need for motorists to use Copthorne Road in preference to remaining on the A.412.

The Council then considered the advantages and disadvantages of (a) permanently closing Copthorne Road at Scots Hill and (b) stopping traffic from using Copthorne Road except for access. Due regard was also taken of the fact that Copthorne Road had been closed to through traffic for some considerable time, and concern had been expressed as to the safety of children who had become accustomed to the very light traffic in the road, as well as the traffic manoeuvre required to cross the northbound lane of the new Scots Hill carriageway to gain access to the 'U' turn for vehicles wishing to go to Rickmansworth. It was finally decided that they would bring in an order banning the use of any part of Copthorne Road by vehicles not requiring access to houses fronting Copthorne Road, Milthorne Close, Chess Vale Rise, Copthorne Close or Scots Hill Lane and that the order would be reviewed when it had been in operation for a period of six months.

However, before this order can be effective the necessary notices have to be given and residents will have an opportunity to submit objections within a period of time.

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CROXLEY GREEN 100 YEARS AGO

*The following article by Mr. Godfrey Cornwall
has been taken from the Parish Magazine of All
Saints' Church with kind permission of the Vicar.*

Croxley Green a hundred years ago was typically rural, with a population barely exceeding 700, living in an area almost twice as large as the Croxley of today—for then it extended as far as Solesbridge Mill, now part of Chorleywood. The economy of the hamlet being a mixed one, part agricultural and part industrial, the farms ranging in size from Scots Hill Farm, with its 26 acres, to farms of 200 or more acres, like Croxley Hall Farm and Cassio Bridge Farm. The chief industrial undertaking was paper manufacture, with four mills devoted to that purpose. Solesbridge Mill, with about 60 employees, owned by the Austins; Loudwater Mill produced newsprint for the 'Illustrated London News', was owned by William McMurray; with its half-stuff mill at Scots Bridge, it employed 150 workpeople; and John Dickinson's Mill on the canal side, built upon land that once formed part of Common Moor, the last load of corn had been taken away and the gleaning bell rung to scour the field for every stem of corn left upon the harvest-field. The corn gathered was then taken to the windmill on Scots Hill where Jessie Watts, the miller, would grind the garnered corn into the flour that would augment their own in the days ahead.

The Green was described at this time as of

were in the 70's employing about 100 workpeople.

The population in those days was concentrated mostly in the area Scots Hill and The Green, where there were about 90 houses, and in the newly made Croxley Green Road, or New Road, as it is now known, were 48 houses. The remainder of the homes were scattered throughout the hamlet, with a small group of cottages in the neighbourhood of Cassiobridge, for the mill employees.

If parents wished their children to attend school, they had the choice of attending Granny Blackwell's dame school at Smoky Hall, on Scots Hill (Granny Blackwell ruled her class with a long hazel rod), or they could attend Elias Stranger's plaiting school on The Green where, apart from being taught the occupation of straw plaiting, they could also be taught to read and write. Children could attend the National School, but this was in the High Street, Rickmansworth. Children who attended there began school at six years of age and completed their education by the age of nine or ten. (Later in the decade compulsory education was introduced and the school-leaving age raised to 12 years.) Then to work they went, into the mills or to the silk-spinning mill or the small factory in Bury Lane, where straw envelopes for wine-bottles were made. They worked 12 hours a day for six days a week for a wage of 2s. 6d., or 12½p. Child labour was also employed on the farms. Girls, when they had finished their schooling, usually went into the kitchens of the large houses to service.

Village Life

Croxley Green of the 70's of the last century was similar to that of like villages; gentry dominated, with cap-doffing and the curtsy the rule, this being the visible sign of respect shown by the less well off members of the community to the carriage folk when they passed by, or on being addressed by the mystic personages.

With large families and small wages there was poverty and at harvest time it was the custom for the poorer families to go into the cornfields after "thatched cottages nestling among cherry trees laden with blossom and with children playing upon the Green", with its five ponds which even in the driest of summers held water and were known by the names of "Stones", "Streeters",

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"Little Green", "Coxhills" and "Robinsons". Cattle grazed upon the Green overlooked by a lad whose duty it was to prevent them straying onto the roadways. On summer evenings it was a common sight to see the customers of the 'Artichoke' play quoits with those of the top house or 'Coach and Horses'. A fair was held on The Green on August Mondays and in July, when the cherries were ripe, Cherry Fair. Cricket in summer and football in winter were played by the children. The Green being the playground of the village. The 'George and Dragon' on Scots Hill had a skittle-alley on the premises for its customers.

THE ROUND TABLE

Adopting, adapting and improving

Why did fifteen young men dress themselves up as Christmas parcels and parade up and down Rickmansworth High Street a few Saturdays ago?

And why did several more of them tow a replica of Stephenson's Rocket around the neighbourhood for ten nights?

Were they seven over the eight or were they members of the Steam Preservation Society?

The answer is simple—they were all members of Rickmansworth Round Table and they were raising money for the Rickmansworth Christmas Tree of Goodwill.

The Christmas Tree fund is now in its twentieth year and is sponsored by Round Table, Rickmansworth Rotary Club, Inner Wheel and Ladies' Circle. Its aim is to provide food parcels at Christmas for the aged, needy and less fortunate people locally—from Maple Cross to Croxley Green.

The Round Tablers do most of the physical work—building the float which tours the area in the evenings leading up to Christmas to collect money and to amuse the children and organising some sort of eye-catching display in the High Street on the Saturday that Father Christmas makes his spectacular "arrival" in Rickmansworth.

And the Rotarians concentrate mainly on distributing the six hundred parcels—worth more than two pounds each—all over the district. That's one of the essential things about the Christmas Tree: the old folk appreciate the parcels but, in many cases, it's the visit from someone they value

more—that someone has actually remembered them!

The organising committee is made up of representatives from all four clubs—the members of Inner Wheel are the wives of the Rotarians and the Tablers' wives form Ladies' Circle—so there are excellent opportunities for fellowship between the clubs at this time of year.

But Christmas is now over and all this work has once again been successfully completed, thanks very largely to the generosity of the generosity of the people of Rickmansworth.

It's a common assumption made by many people that Round Table is a 'junior' Rotary but, although their aims are similar, they are not actually connected.

But it was a Rotarian that sowed the seeds of Round Table forty-seven years ago. At a meeting of Norwich Rotary Club the youngest member, Louis Marchesi, expressed the need for a club where young men could get together and exchange their own ideas, to think and work on their own and not always be fed ideas by older men. Indeed a club for young men only.

And two years later, at the British Industries Fair in Birmingham, the then Prince of Wales said: 'The young business and professional men of this country must get together round the table, adopt methods that have proved so sound in the past, adapt them to the changing needs of the times and, wherever possible, improve them.'

So eventually Round Table was evolved with its own motto—Adopt, Adapt, Improve—and today it's a vast organisation with branches in over twenty countries which, together with the Apex Clubs and the Kinsmen Clubs of Canada, form the World Council of Young Men's Service Clubs.

But the basis of Round Table is the individual Table and Rickmansworth Table is one of over a thousand Tables affiliated to the National Association of Round Tables of Great Britain and Ireland. They have fortnightly meetings at Durrants, Croxley Green, when they conduct their business, perhaps invite a speaker to attend, have a meal and a chat—in fact, the accent is firmly on fellowship.

But there is a lot more to it than that. The community service committee are always coming up with ideas of projects to get involved in

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THE GREEN

Editor's note: The following is an extract from a letter printed in the *Watford Observer* recently. We reproduce it here because we feel that it describes a very true picture of what has and is happening to The Green. We would point out to readers that the Residents' Association, for its part has time and time again expressed in these columns and elsewhere its disgust at the treatment given to The Green by local authorities during the last few years:

'Last week I returned for a short stay to my former home in Croxley Green. At the moment I am living in the North of England, and I looked forward to a look at some of my old haunts.

In the North of England we are used to our inherited landscape which has been despoiled over wide areas by the activities of man. But in the past few years enormous schemes have been completed; the cleaning of buildings; the construction of new town centres; the removal of the great tip heaps and the laying out of large green areas for everybody's pleasure. What a surprise I had when returning to my home area. I found that the council had completely lost its sense of what was good for the community. Rickmansworth Urban Council have a lot to

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answer for.

As a child I remember many hours spent playing on The Green. There were long grasses of many kinds. Wild flowers could be found, it was a beautiful natural place enjoyed by the Croxley people. But what is it like now?

The Green was entrusted into the council's hands by Caius College, and a fine mess they have made of it. It is despoiled by ugly lamp posts, and hundreds of little white posts; the grass is cut by machine so that it looks like an overgrown lawn; the flowers have gone.

At the top of The Green I was dumbfounded at what the R.U.D.C. have allowed to happen. A builder has been granted permission to develop the grounds of White Gates. This lovely old house, now demolished, used to be sheltered from The Green by a 15ft. hedge which contained many large trees, including a magnificent walnut. Believe it or not, in an age when every effort is being made in some areas to preserve such trees, the vast majority of this hedge has been removed.

Previous councils have tried to protect the interests of Croxley Green residents and keep The Green as natural as possible. May I suggest that the present one take another look at Croxley Green and decide whether their job is to protect or destroy it?

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locally and of ways of raising money for these projects. The Aquashows, which the Table have run for several years, have raised thousands of pounds for various charities and over a thousand pounds was raised in one evening for Muscular Dystrophy when they ran a 'Night with the Stars' in Watford. And it's not all hard work—there are plenty of parties and dances going on, too!

Round Table has a rule that when a Tabler reaches the age of forty he must retire. So Tablers are always looking for fresh blood, young men who they think will put something into Round Table and get something out of it as well. And Rickmansworth are certainly no exception!

CROXLEY GREEN FLOWER GROUP

The Croxley Green Flower Group was formed in 1966 from a nucleus of twenty-one who attended the preliminary meeting, some of whom are still active members.

When we started the Group we all agreed our aim was for enjoyment from flower arrangement rather than to keep strictly 'to the book' and I think this is why we are today a flourishing Group with a membership of nearly 100. We meet each month in the B.R.C.S. Hall in the New Road and do not take ourselves too seriously. We have expert demonstrators from whom we learn a lot and go home from the meetings refreshed by the beauty of floral arrangements.

Our annual subscription is low—75p, and we aim to keep it as low as possible whilst it can be subsidised by our Sales Table, etc. New members are welcomed—our limit is 100 and when we reach this number we shall have a waiting list. Visitors are also welcomed at 15p on admission per night. Our Secretary, Mrs. Janet Quick, 3 Scots Hill, Croxley Green, will be happy to supply further details.

K. M. Raggott, Chairman.

BALDWIN'S LANE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

More words of criticism were heard at our recent A.G.M. regarding this rather unfortunate affair. I feel it must be pointed out that several members of the Round Table who have been closely involved with the project right from the start did try very hard to make a success of what could have been a worthwhile achievement.

However, quite a number of people who had helped at the beginning did not see their way to fulfilling their obligations due to one reason or another so it was then left for one or two members to complete the job as best as they could at week-ends. We regret having to pursue the matter but we feel that in the circumstances and in the best interests of children who would normally play there this area, which is at present littered with broken bottles, should be cleared once and for all by the council and then either restored to its original state or developed properly as a playground.

NAMING OF DISTRICT NO. 8

One public spirited person in Croxley Green submitted to us a long list of possible names for the new district. All these and many others have been duly considered by the Council. The name that most delegates from local societies seem to favour is 'South West Herts' with 'Three Rivers' running second. It is understood that Government approval now has to be sought.

STOP PRESS

We have now learnt that the Joint Councils have been unable to reach agreement on which of these two names should be selected. The Boundries Commission will therefore now have to make the decision.

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385 BUS ROUTE

The local press have recently printed a number of articles regarding the poor service offered by local buses. We feel that this publicity is due in part to the petition organised by us together with the article on the subject in our last issue. The first route mentioned was in fact the 385 which is generally considered to be one of the worst services. It will be interesting to see if things improve during the next few months; if they do not we will then pursue the matter further.

R.U.D.C. MEETINGS

The public are admitted to certain meetings of Rickmansworth U.D.C. at Basing House, commencing at 8 p.m. as follows:

Council meetings: January 30, March 13 and April 24.

Public Works: January 11, February 22, April 5.

Community Services: January 9, February 20, March 3.

Housing: January 2, February 13, March 27.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Editor would be pleased to receive articles or letters concerning matters of local interest. Con-

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Mr. R. E. J. Boardman, 16 Frankland Road.

Mr. J. W. Broome, 114 Links Way.

Mr. J. S. Robinson, 46 Warwick Way.

Chairman: Mr. F. N. Cherrill, 10 Bateman Road.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. P. W. A. Dixon, 33 Winchester Way.

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Mr. A. S. Brode, 1 Parrots Close, The Green.

Mr. L. L. Dobey, 11 The Green.

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Mr. J. H. Gardner, 46 Canterbury Way.

Mr. J. E. Gell, Little Waterdell House, Little Green Lane.

Mr. D. H. Jarritt, 11 Copthorne Road.

Mr. T. J. Lucas, 200 Baldwins Lane.

Mrs. M. Milne, 286 Baldwins Lane.

Mr. W. W. Rutherford, 104 Grove Crescent.

Mr. B. H. W. Tullett, 9 Green Lane.

Mrs. D. B. Whitfield, 224 New Road.

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 into 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 10p, 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.

tributions, please, for the Spring issue must be received by Saturday, April 21. His address is Little Waterdell House, Little Green Lane. Tel. Rickmansworth 75570.

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