The Croxley Green RESIDENT

Published by

CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

No. 143 **Editor: Sue Stagg** **SPRING 1982**

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Another more famous Chairman had a series of thoughts which were published as a guide to his followers. I do not presume to share my thoughts for such a purpose but rather to provoke thought among those who care to read this column.

Thought — Why should we who live outside the G.L.C. area be subject to the whims and fancies of said G.L.C., the London Borough of Bromley, and other external forces over our local rail transport? Why should we not have a voice when once again there is a threat to the very existence of our branch line?

When the timetable was restructured in favour of Rickmansworth, London Transport refused our association representation, whilst accepting representation from communities up the line who were not affected. We must fight to be properly represented should the threat of closure become more than a vague threat.

Thought — Is it democratic for party political groupings to decide issues in private caucus and then no matter how close the decision cast all their votes one way? We have all heard complaints about Union block voting, can we really accept this practice when the matter is local and is really not party-political?

Thought — It is gratifying that the different bodies concerned seem to have come up with a sensible solution to the problem of access to the D.R.G. mill site, BUT is it right that the method of removal of the spoil from the unwanted tip is not seemingly within our control? Must we be plagued with heavy lorries thundering through our urban roads? Cannot this traffic be put upon the railways as we have already suggested? Which leads me to:—

Thought — I don't like heavy lorries, who does? Instead of talking about heavier lorries why don't we talk about putting their loads back onto the railways? If God had intended us to be shaken out of our houses, made prematurely hard-of-hearing and suffocated by noxious diesel fumes surely He would not have given us British Rail. Alternatively, of course, we could follow the advice of Bob Hampson, our illustrious past editor and resurrect the canals for freight traffic. It would certainly lead to a quieter life.

Thought — Why do our daily papers think that only bad news is 'good' news? I read the 'Watford Observer' every week — I'm not advertising it, but of one thing I'm pleased. They are not afraid to publish the ordinary, the happy, the everyday stories that make up 99.9% of all our lives. I'm an incurable romantic, I still enjoy the happy ending, I love the story which is pure entertainment, I love fairy stories but not of course the politicians' variety.

Thought — Why did someone recently, wishing to denigrate our association, refer to our support by the attendance at our Annual General Meeting? Did they not consider all those who deliver this magazine, all those who collect subscriptions, all those who pay those subscriptions? We do consider you and I want to thank all of you. So that we can put the lie to such innuendo, why don't you turn up at our A.G.M.? Why don't you offer to deliver the 'Resident', why don't you offer to collect subscriptions? You will be very welcome.

Thought — Why doesn't everyone agree with me? No, on second thoughts, life would be very dull and who would then be there to make me think again? I could be wrong — I often am.

John T. Hedges

CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

The

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the above Association

will be held at

THE LIBRARY, BARTON WAY

on

FRIDAY, 26th MARCH at 8 p.m.

A MEMBER OF THE LOCAL FIRE BRIGADE WILL TALK ABOUT SAFETY IN THE HOME

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EDITORIAL

Thank you. I would like to begin by thanking all those who were involved in the production and distribution of the last issue. We all knew it was going to be late, but never dreamt it would be printed and have to be distributed the week before Christmas in all the snow! We are very grateful to those who surmounted the problem like good King Wenceslas, though often feeling like his Page! I think most of you received your 'Resident' — please let me know if you

C.G.R. & R.A. COMMITTEE 1981/82

Ben Tullett (President)
9 Green Lane. Rick. 72016.
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33 Valley Walk. Watford 39319
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Halfway House, Cassiobridge
Watford 28418

Please send letters, contributions and advertisements to:

Mrs. S. Stagg
83 Links Way,
Croxley Green, Herts.
Telephone: Watford 35059.

by July 31st 1982 if possible.

The man who finds life will find it through trusting God
Romans 1, verse 17.

You are invited to worship at the
Baptist Church, Baldwins Lane
Morning Worship: 9.30 a.m.
Family Service: 11.30 a.m. Secretary: R.L. Simpson
Evening Praise: 6.30 p.m. Telephone: Rick. 73481

haven't. I was working from an old distribution list which caused a few problems. I now have a more up-to-date list. Credit must also go to the typesetter and printer, who provided a personal service. I intend to ask them to put an imprint on this issue and subsequently.

Spring issue. I am again grateful to all those who have contributed articles, including this time, some well-known local figures. We were pleased to receive articles from Mr. Fred Housego, Dr. Michael Hodgson and Miss Kay Raggett. Another of our contributors this time is the new Secretary of Rickmansworth Residents' Association, who wrote to us proposing contact between the two organizations on overlapping concerns, one of them being the restoration of the rail link between the two towns. As this is a pet scheme of his, I invited him to write for this issue.

Dogs – again. A most frequent cause for complaint, and not for the first time, is the state of our pavements, alleyways and parks. I am a dog owner myself and know many, like myself, who try to be responsible owners and prevent their animals from fouling these areas. It can be done. Why give dogs a bad name when it is the owners who are to blame?

Litter – again. There are signs again that our woods, country lanes and towpaths are becoming sites for the dumping of rubbish. Rubble has been left in Rousebarn Lane on several sites and the wooded slopes at this side of the Golf course on the way to Whippendell Woods have been observed to be final resting places for a golf umbrella, baby buggy, vacuum cleaner and car parts, as well as a bundle of 'free' newspapers. Bundles of these and double glazing advertising leaflets are to be found in the alleyway connecting Rousebarn Lane with Links Way. Maybe we would like to think that the culprits are not local, or are they?

Public meetings. As I write this, there are two meetings in the offing to bring to your notice. You will see details of these elsewhere in this issue. One is being organized by Three Rivers District Council as part of their public consultation on the future management of the Green, and the other is our own A.G.M. In the last issue of the 'Resident', residents were accused of being uncaring and apathetic – can we all be proved to be otherwise by showing support for these meetings? Both meetings give an opportunity for you to voice your opinions, and in the case of our A.G.M., also to stand as/elect others as members of the Committee. New Members are invariably surprised by the width and depth of the matters with which we deal. We find that the people with whom we communicate (local councillors and Council officers, British Rail, L.T.E., for example) very helpful and eager to solve the problems with which we involve them. Will YOU be there?

Sue Stagg

CROXLEY – METROPOLITAN RAILWAY STATION

Articles have appeared recently in the local press concerning the possibility that the Croxley to Watford spur of the Metropolitan line might be closed. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, it is perhaps worth making a few comments about this situation.

1. The announcement by London Transport of its contingency plans, falls into two parts. The first concerns those stations where passenger traffic is so low that it would be difficult to justify their continued use in any circumstance. The second group is more difficult to define although with the entire network losing money, any closures which concentrate the system would be beneficial. Croxley falls into the latter group and would only be considered if London Transport were under increased pressure to reduce costs.

The timing of the statement by London Transport may well be political as it would help to focus attention on the "catastrophic" effect of the Law Lords decision.

2. For many years Hertfordshire County Council have been applying for a transport grant from Central Government to cover the losses incurred by the spur. The latest information available to the Residents' Association suggests a figure of £250,000. After the rise in fares which will take place in March this year, the 1,400 people who use Croxley and Watford will pay an annual average of £800 each to travel to London. The total revenue for the year would thus be over one million pounds. It seems unlikely that the cost of maintenance and salaries would exceed this figure unless London Transport's accounting practice was used. This practice apportions revenue across the total distance travelled, therefore a passenger from Croxley contributes only a proportion of his fare to the spur. This is fine in theory, but in practice it would have to be assumed that all Croxley and Watford passengers would travel to Rickmansworth if the spur was closed. When natural problems have caused the stations to be closed, our experience suggests that the majority would use the British Rail services from Watford.

3. The introduction of the new timetable at the end of 1980 demonstrated the use London Transport makes of the spur. It seems clear that this section of track is used to house trains which are eventually in service for the benefit of the "Pinner group" of stations. There seems to be little spare capacity at Rickmansworth or further north to carry these "slow" trains.

Whatever the intention of London Transport in making detailed plans available to the press, the revelation will have caused concern in this area. Nearly every household in Croxley would be affected and therefore, despite the unlikely event, every resident should be aware of the situation and, more importantly to group together to be prepared for the worst. Because events may make it necessary to contact people at short notice, the Residents' Association would be obliged if the form below could be completed and returned to any member of the Committee (see list on front page).

Howard Brown

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HISTORY ON YOUR DOORSTEP

By now many of you will be well aware that Yours Truly has been sneaking quietly into your lounge on Thursday evenings presenting a series of programmes on local history. This article is by no means an advertisement for the programme or for me; it is simply to explain what goes on when a BBC crew invade a small village for a week.

Let me begin by saying that the programme is the brainchild of BBC producer Bryn Brooks, who works in the Continuing Education Department. He it was who produced the series on Family Trees with Gordon Honeycombe. I was called in in March to discuss the presenting of the series, the idea being that I should be the interested amateur being guided through the minefields of archives, reference libraries, museums, personal diaries and so on that go to make up local history. Many people have asked me why it is we have chosen the places that will eventually appear on the films – Swavesey, Halifax, Alloa, Ealing

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL have arranged a meeting to enable residents to discuss the need for an enhancement committee for the Green conservation area. This will be at **All Saints Church Hall on APRIL 2nd at 8 pm.** Everyone is welcome to attend, so do please come along, and find out about the proposals which could affect one of our most picturesque areas.

THOUGHTS ON THE GREEN

The Green is now administered by Three Rivers District Council, the Officer responsible for the day-to-day arrangements being Mr O. H. Wardell. The focal point of life here for many years, the Green has been the scene of many celebrations, a tradition which our Summer Revels continues. Many more residents made use of the Green in the 'old days'. A safe playground for children, a good cricket pitch for the school to use, a pleasant meeting place for people, and for walks, particularly on Sundays. It has changed little in passing years, apart, of course, from the surrounding buildings, although trees were in greater abundance. The road was drained by ditches either side – good for jumping – the dells were more defined, wild flowers (harebells, yellow bedstraw and trefoil) abounded, sheep grazed peacefully. A simple natural place which was much enjoyed.

Now, modern living requires changes, and these have so far taken place without too much visual alteration. Please spare us change for the sake of change. Let us hope that the Green is allowed to continue as a place which all residents may enjoy.

Kay Raggett

ARE YOU A DAILY COMMUTER FROM CROXLEY STATION (MET. LINE)?

In the light of current rumours about the closure of certain uneconomic lines on the London Transport system, and that the Croxley-Watford link may be again under threat, it seems relevant to mention that Rickmansworth and Croxley Green Farepayers' Association Committee are looking for a representative from Croxley Green. The Secretary of the Association is R. I. Pratt (Telephone: Chorleywood 3520), so please contact him if you can help.

Tel: RICKMANSWORTH 74074-75922

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YOUR HERITAGE – PUBLIC FOOTPATHS

Croxley Green is blessed with many fine public footpaths which are there for you to enjoy at any time and free of charge. Do you use this most valuable asset – our access into the countryside? Do you know where the footpaths are?

You may have seen the finger posts stating "Public Footpath", but have no clear idea where it leads. You do not need any great ability to find your way around Croxley's countryside. Where do we start? A visit to the stationer's to purchase, for about £2, an Ordnance Survey Map Sheet No. 166 or 176, both of which show the public footpaths around Croxley. These maps are not difficult to read and you may already have seen something of these maps during your schooldays. It is worthwhile getting to know your maps and your study will be richly rewarded as your knowledge of an area expands.

There is no need for any other purchases for short walks in the countryside. Strong lace-up shoes are recommended and dogs should be kept on a lead. If rain is about, it would be wise to carry a light anorak or cagoule with you.

Let us start our walk from the pond on the Green. Take the lane northwards towards Waterdell House and pass along the public footpath between the houses. Follow the red dotted line on your map and turn right at the junction of footpaths after going through a small woodland spinney. Continue until you arrive at Rousebarn Lane and then cross the road carefully to ascend Jacott's Hill and to cross the Golf Course (take due note of the warning notices). You should arrive at the Lock on the Grand Union Canal.

You will see from your map that there is another path going towards Whippendell Woods. Take it and hopefully eventually you will arrive again at Rousebarn Lane near to Chandler's Cross. You must now exercise extreme care as you turn right to walk a short distance along the road to Chandler's Cross. Walk on the right side of the road, facing the traffic in single file, making sure the traffic can see you from front and rear. At Chandlers Cross leave temptation behind you and take the signposted footpath opposite the pub back to Croxley Green, again exercising care towards the end of this track. Turn left along the lane and you will be able to retrace your steps back to the pond.

The total distance is about five miles and take your time and look at the scenery. You will be able to enjoy fine views of Croxley and enjoy our woodlands. Keep to the public footpaths and use your map at all times. Know where you are and take time to pick out the landmarks.

A new group of the Ramblers Association has been formed to cover Watford and the Three Rivers district. If you would like a programme (free of charge), please send a note with a stamped addressed envelope to Roger King, of 44 Hastings Way, Croxley Green.

Good walking!

Roger King

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MODEL AIRCRAFT FLYING ON COMMON MOOR

A number of articles regarding the noise made by model aircraft have appeared in the 'Resident' over the last few years. Readers may therefore be interested to hear that a new byelaw has been passed and came into effect on 25 November 1981.

The new byelaw restricts flying to the following times:–

DAYS	HOURS
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday	9 am to 6 pm
Saturday	10 am to 12 noon 2 pm to 4 pm
Sunday and Bank Holidays	10 am to 12 noon

Three Rivers District Council are arranging for temporary notices to be erected on the Moor in the next few weeks. They plan to erect more permanent (vandal resistant?) notices before the Spring.

Howard Brown

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Road, Weedon, Butleigh and Carmarthen. The reason is that none of these locations is an obvious choice. They don't boast magnificent remains such as Stonehenge, castles like Warwick, ancestral homes like Castle Howard or carefully preserved medieval town centres like Canterbury, York and so on. In fact, all the locations are the sorts of place that the vast majority of British people live in and therefore can, to use that overworked American phrase, relate to. Each place we filmed also had to have some sort of storyline that pointed to a way of life in the past and showed some of the problems and pitfalls of looking at your locality.

The people who guided me round the various villages and towns were, by and large, non-academic but deeply committed amateur historians. For example, Eric Webster at Halifax is a retired schoolteacher, Terry James from Carmarthen is a full-time printer, Ann Healey from Butleigh is a housewife. So the idea behind the programme was to show ordinary people with a fascination for local history doing a professional job, without actually deriving their livelihood from it.

To conclude, what effect do I hope the series will have? In a dream world I support it would be to see thousands of people besieging record offices, buying ordnance survey maps by the thousand, queuing at reference libraries etc., but in the real world I would hope that it will make people a little angry about what we have allowed to disappear and more committed to preserving some of what remains. On another level, maybe it will promote a sizeable minority to investigate their local history and perhaps add another chapter to our understanding of the way in which their communities have developed. History on Your Doorstep indeed.

Fred Housego

THE CHILTERN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

Have you visited the Chiltern open-air Museum? The Museum opened to the public last Summer and after atrocious weather in the early Summer, it enjoyed a successful season.

The organisation was founded in 1976 as a registered charity to set up a Museum of buildings from the Chiltern area. If, for a variety of reasons, an interesting building can no longer remain on its original site and if it is suitable for the Museum, it is carefully surveyed. Drawings are made, and the various parts marked. Then volunteers take down the building piece by piece, and it is transported to the Museum for storage until it can be repaired and re-erected.

Some of the buildings in store will need professional repair when funds allow (there are several medieval buildings, including a tithe barn from St. Albans whose timbers needed a crane to lift them), but the small buildings are being repaired and re-erected by volunteers. Working parties of volunteers meet in the workshop area every 2nd and 4th Sunday in the month engaging in these tasks and also restoring farm machinery. There is scope for anyone with enthusiasm, and those with skills and specialized knowledge (bricklaying, carpentry, metalwork, surveying, architecture etc.) are doubly welcome.

Amongst the buildings already re-erected is a magnificent medieval thatched barn from Arborfield in Berkshire. In addition an Iron-age house has been constructed based on archeological excavations made in Dunstable. There is also a nature trail to follow, and a refreshment hut serving home-made teas to sustain you for the journey home.

It is hoped that the Museum will be able to collect and display items such as tools and agricultural implements associated with the construction and use of the buildings on display, and so present an interesting and educational insight into the past life in the Chilterns.

How do you get there? Take the A412 road to Denham as far as Maple Cross then turn right at the traffic lights and follow the Chalfont Road straight on for 2 miles to the entrance to Norland Park, on the right.

The Museum re-opens for the season on Easter Sunday and is open every Sunday from 2-6 p.m. thereafter until the end of September.

Further information about the working parties and items for the collection can be obtained from me at Rickmansworth 76073.

Dr. M. Hodgson

DID YOU KNOW...

that we have a local 'bobby', who would like you to contact him if you have any problems? He is P.C. Steddy, based at Rickmansworth Police Station and can be contacted on Watford 44444 (Ext. 305).

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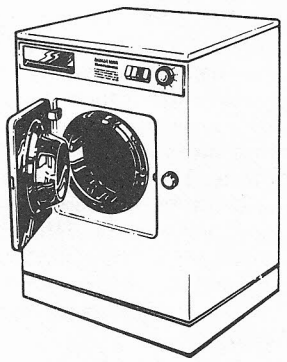

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CROXLEY WOODS

Having been approached by Residents complaining of horse riders cutting up the walks through the Woods and leaving it in a muddy and messy condition, I asked our Committee to contact Three Rivers District Council who have kindly promised to erect notice boards not only pointing out the tracks which horse riders must follow, but warning them not to ride elsewhere.

I would ask residents when walking in the Woods to warn any horse riders who are not riding on the recognised tracks to do so or be reported.

Owen G. Anthony

RESIDENTS' WALK

Roger King (see article by him elsewhere in this issue) is going to lead a walk around our countryside again. Some of you may remember that he led a number of walks for the Association a few years ago. This one will be on SUNDAY, APRIL 4th, meeting outside the Coach and Horses pub on the Green at 2.30 pm. Roger proposes to take us on a circular route down the River Chess, through Loudwater and towards Sarratt Church End and then back, a distance of about 4 miles. As before, all are welcome. Remember waterproof footwear, if damp underfoot, and light refreshments if you wish.

LINE OF COMMUNICATION – SOME LOCAL THOUGHTS (Part 1)

By way of preamble, I am glad to have been born in the age of steam trains. The romance with which these were invested no longer survives for me in the perhaps more efficient but infinitely less characterful boxes on wheels that with diesel or electric motive power have now superseded them. As a boy in the nineteen-fifties I can remember often running on to the footbridge leading from Solomon's Hill to Rickmansworth Park (following the line of an old Roman trackway, the ridge of which can still be discerned running across the park) where it crossed the railway and goods yard (now a car park) just out of Rickmansworth Metropolitan station. There I would delight in the perverse thrill of exposure to the full blast of steam, smoke and grime as the since rerouted "Master Cutler" or "South Yorkshireman" expresses thundered underneath from Marylebone, bracing themselves for the long haul up through the Chilterns to Aylesbury, Brackley, Rugby, Nottingham and beyond on the old Central line. (The old "birdcage" bridge that carried them over the main L.M.S. line just south of Rugby station is still in position even though the last trains ran across it in 1969! Is this quaint evidence of nostalgia on British Rail's part? Does anybody maintain it, I wonder? But I digress.) Even the Metropolitan's more mundane 2-6-4 tanks gave off much the same alluring aroma.

Running on down Solomon's Hill, before the hideous banality of Northway and Penn Place ever scarred the vicinity, and across the High Street down Bury Lane, past the sadly and unimaginatively culverted watersplash, one eventually came to Church Street. Turning right towards Batchworth, one passed through what until not so long ago was clearly the least changed part of Rickmansworth. On the great bend sweeping round St. Mary's church, and before a singularly ugly development of houses on the site a couple of years ago, there was another station opposite the churchyard. The platform and awning made this quite clear up to its demolition, although goods services were withdrawn in January 1967 and passenger services as far back as March 1952. In more recent years Woolcott's the printers occupied the premises, with a sign advertising their services in French and Russian as well as English!

This station marked the terminus of what was called Lord Ebury's line after its main promoter – MP for Middlesex from 1847 to 1857 before his elevation to the peerage and sometime resident of Moor Park mansion. The conception was of a sweeping link to the west of London from Hatfield by way of St. Albans, Watford, Uxbridge and West Drayton between the Great Northern and Great Western Railways, with strategic connections to other lines along the route. As so often, lack of money prevented this being fully realized. The dismembered spurs to north and south of Uxbridge, the similarly defunct connection between St. Albans and Hatfield, and the happily still existant one from Watford to St. Albans (opened in 1858 four years before that to Rickmansworth) are all fragments of this dream.

The stretch from Rickmansworth (Church Street) to Moor Lane Crossing off Tolpits Lane is now a delightful walkway, passing out from Ricky through a little glade along what has become an isthmus between lakes. These are mostly fairly recent and result from gravel workings. The walk continues skirting the old watercress beds which were a source of revenue for the railway in its heyday, before crossing the Grand Union Canal and passing under the younger (but, as yet, not longer-lived) Metropolitan and B.R. tracks between Moor Park and Watford South junction to divide Croxley Moor from the Tolpits Lane industrial estate.

Peter Waters

Part 2 will appear in our next issue.

THE REVELS ON THE GREEN, 1982

The date for your diaries is Saturday June 19th. Those wishing to enter floats and/or to take stalls should contact the Secretary of Croxley Green Society: Mrs A. Middleton, 60 Beechcroft Avenue. (Telephone: Watford 24576).

FAREWELL, MR. LYNN

Our librarian, Mr. Lynn, whose article on the local library services appeared in our last issue, is leaving us in March for a new post in Austria. In the time he has been with us, he has participated in community life. He has visited local schools, and, together with his assistants, has organized regular holiday activities for the children. We wish to thank him for his hard work and extend our good wishes to him in his new job.

A USEFUL ADDRESS

No apologies for including this, although it has appeared before:

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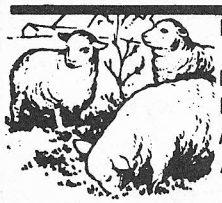

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