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THE CROXLEY RESIDENT

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

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Editor—R. H. HUTCHINSON, 4 Rochester Way

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EDITORIAL

Before the war a very large roller stood on the Green and many local children used to love to clamber over it. It was there, however, to roll the cricket pitch, of which no trace remains to-day. Now that Rickmansworth Council have taken over the Green you may wonder, as we do, whether they wish to see cricket played there again and whether they will be in a position to permit it anyway. The future of the Green seems unpredictable.

Elsewhere in this issue appears a letter from a correspondent on housing subsidies. Every ratepayer and resident must have given thought at some time or other to this subject on which discussion tends to become vehement and acrimonious and on which the holding of arbitrary opinions is probably ill-advised.

We mention the Green and housing subsidies as two matters out of several on which readers are likely to have something to say and the wish to say it. Your attention is, therefore, drawn to the accompanying leaflet giving notice of an open meeting called for by members attending the Association's Annual General Meeting to provide an opportunity for open discussion. We hope for a large attendance and that even those who feel unable to give voice to their thoughts, may find it enlightening to hear the views of others; or, to make the acquaintance, prior to the local elections, shortly to take place, of the Croxley representatives on the Rickmansworth Council who have been invited.

On the question of local elections we cannot help wondering to what extent voters are satisfied with being offered a choice between candidates representing one political party or another, and how far this state of affairs is responsible for the apathy which has been so manifest. If recent happenings at Oxhey are typical results of local party politics there would appear to be a crying need for a resurgence of Independent activity in this sphere.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

What does it feel like to have become, in effect, a freeholder of The Green? If you are an average ratepayer you are (a) uncertain how it involves you, (b) unaware you had the privilege, or (c) content and very fortunately informed.

When the proposal to take over the freehold from Gonville and Caius College first came before the Council it had a hostile reception. There were suggestions of the Council being "blackmailed" and "bludgeoned" and the Councillors, clearly suspicious of the responsibilities they might inherit, referred the matter back for further discussion. The debate revealed one factor—a depressing lack of knowledge of The Green, its history and the Commoners' rights.

Six weeks later the proposal reappeared and was passed in the twinkling of an eye. The "blackmail," the "bludgeoning," the misgivings, so frankly expressed, had evaporated; or at least, so it would appear. It was the father and mother of an anti-climax and even the case-hardened Press raised a cynical eyebrow.

What caused this extraordinary conversion of suspicion into acquiescence? Not a word has been spoken or published by way of explanation. Apparently it is none of the ratepayers' business. It may not be the Council's intention to cloak major issues in mystery, yet they achieve that result with distasteful, if irregular, frequency.

In the "Rickmansworth Observations" column of the *Watford Observer* a few weeks ago there was an admirable comment on this failing to provide information to the public. It is to be hoped the columnist's words—and hints—are taken to heart.

The hope of closer touch between Council and ratepayers suggested in a January speech by the Council Chairman has been short-lived. Once again the ratepayer is left to guess.

Well, the Council are in a dilemma more or less of their own making. They have my sympathy but they would probably enjoy a wider and more sympathetic understanding if they were a little more frank in some of their deliberations.

A. T. THOMSON.

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CORRESPONDENCE

123 Winton Drive.

Dear Sir,

At the Association's last Annual General Meeting a member proposed the abolition of subsidies paid on Council Houses by ratepayers, bearing in mind the number of cars and television aerials seen on the local Council Estate.

As a member of this Association, and a former Council tenant, I have viewed this very vexed question from both sides of the fence and would like to put the following to our members:

- (1) About 400 houses out of approximately 1,100 in the Rickmansworth Urban District are pre-war of which a large number are in Croxley Green. The subsidy of these pre-war houses is roughly £4 per annum, and taking into account the high cost of repairs the economic rent should be 15/0d.—22/0d. a week according to size of the house. In fact tenants are paying approximately 10/0d. per week more than the economic rent for their accommodation which is more than the average rates paid by Croxley residents for all Council services. The Council's reason for this increase is that the cash is needed to help keep the rents of new houses down otherwise the new houses would be too expensive for the average person to rent.
- (2) If subsidies were taken off many rents of the new houses would be in the region of £2 10s. 0d. per week, and any tenant able to afford this would quite obviously buy his own house. Therefore, you would have the problem of people on lower incomes going into Council Houses owing to need but finding it quite impossible to pay the rent asked and we would still have to give a subsidy.
- (3) The Rickmansworth Urban District Council tenants do most of their own interior decorating and generally the houses are kept in exceedingly good condition but that is only because the tenants can afford it and I would say that getting rid of high salaried tenants would probably mean the Council having to recommence doing the interior decorating or finding the property not kept anywhere near the standard that we have to-day.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

M. L. WATKINS

(Formerly Chairman of Croxley Green Tenants Association.)

PEN-POINTS

Canterbury Way.

An increasing number of small children, aged 5, 6 and 7 require to cross Baldwins Lane to the Girton Way footpath en route for Malvern Way School. Traffic, particularly in the morning, is heavy and fast down Baldwins Lane and although many mothers patrol their own children—and others—across, I think a "Beware Children Crossing" or other suitable sign should warn motorists—especially those coming down Baldwins Lane and generally at a fairly fast rate.

ANXIOUS MOTHER.

[EDITOR.—Our Road Safety Delegate is enquiring on this point.]

Dear Sir,

Why can't house owners cut their over-hanging trees and bushes? Twice at night recently I have nearly had my glasses knocked off by an overhanging branch at—Durrants Drive. But for glasses my eyes might have suffered. It's probably just thoughtlessness, but it might be a very serious accident to someone one of these days.

IRATE.

[EDITOR.—We have withheld the full postal address, but as this is the second complainant in this matter we feel sure the householder in question will remedy this.]

COMING EVENTS

We are prepared to announce and give brief details of any coming events in the locality which are likely to prove of interest to residents and their families.

Any organisation wishing to take advantage of this opportunity should notify the Editor some eight weeks before the event is due, giving details as to the nature and purpose of the function, the venue, and the sponsors.

Publication will be subject to availability of space and the discretion of the Editor and the Committee of the Association.

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Upwards or Outwards. Rickmansworth Council is now thinking of going upwards, instead of forever straggling outwards, in its future housing policy. We have always said that consideration should be given to building flats for those who prefer to live in them, but that people should not be forced to become flat-dwellers. We would always be pleased to conduct, along with bodies similar to ourselves who are close to the electorate, a poll of public opinion which would, no doubt, yield some useful information. Rickmansworth town centre might prove ideal for this type of development.

* * * *

Council House Rents. The notice given by the Council that the rents of certain Council properties will be increased comes as no surprise as everyone realises that the housing account must be balanced.

* * * *

Rickmansworth to the Fore. The leaders of Moor Park and of Rickmansworth appear to regard their two districts as all-important, and it is noticeable that on occasions such as the recent Council Dinner all talk is of Rickmansworth, sometimes coupled with Moor Park, not as the centre of an administrative unit but for its own sake. Mention is rarely made of other surrounding districts on which the unit depends and we wonder whether snubs and aloofness will in time force such "poor relation" districts to seek fusion with other adjoining administrative units who would not be ashamed to have them. We in Croxley Green, for example, must distinguish carefully between full and equal acceptance and mere toleration because of the volume of electors.

* * * *

Bus Shelters. The Council are definitely to find the money for the bus shelters so urgently needed in Croxley Green. We hope that the little bird who brought us this message is right on this occasion and that the small amount of money required for this purpose will be forthcoming and will not be used for "extras" in Rickmansworth.

* * * *

L.M.R.—Met Link-up. Mr. F. H. Gurney undoubtedly has many supporters for his scheme to link these two rail systems but if whisperings in official quarters are anything to go by he has as much hope of seeing it in operation as we have of finding the Transport Executive's Public Relations Officers queuing at Croxley Green to tell us that they are prepared to accept all those just and sensible proposals which we have put forward.

* * * *

Watford Road Sewage. At long last a contractor has been appointed to carry out the work of the Watford Road sewers. This matter has been one of the most annoying as far as services within Croxley Green are concerned and it is to be hoped that the work can be completed before the summer months when the position is likely to become intolerable.

Hertfordshire Schools. The Herts C.C. booklet, "A Hundred New Schools" has explained to many why the Education Rate for the County has been so high.

According to a recent report in one of the National newspapers Herts is fast becoming the educational shop window of the world and without doubt the programme has been one of the major achievements of the post-war era. It is to be hoped that the vast amount spent on new buildings is to be protected by adequate maintenance as we cannot afford any heavier burden of capital expenditure.

* * * *

Fuel Office. Bushey now wish to join Watford, Rickmansworth, Chorleywood and Hemel Hempstead in sharing a joint Fuel Office based in Watford. It will be a good thing when these can be abolished entirely.

* * * *

Bus Service. Notwithstanding that the population figures have risen appreciably the L.T.E. have seen fit to reduce certain services affecting Croxley Green and surrounding districts and certain supporting train services have been withdrawn. Inside information indicates that it is the practice of the L.T.E. to base service withdrawals or reductions on figures obtained by spot checks taken at "non-peak" times and after buses have partially emptied at specific points en route. We would suggest that when preparing schemes for withdrawal or reduction the L.T.E. put their checks on the buses in question for every journey on every bus route every day for a fortnight and that they avoid selecting periods when school or trade holidays occur.

* * * *

Shops—Baldwins Lane West End. After many months, in fact years, of talk there is now some activity at the top end of Baldwins Lane and we may soon see the long-promised shops. There are still other matters in connection with shops to be settled but we prefer not to comment at this stage.

* * * *

Grass Verges. The Council regard grass verges as suitable finishes to pavements near schools and consider that children should be instructed to "Keep off the grass". This seems to expect too much of children, who, let us be thankful, will always be children.

* * * *

Commoners' Rights. Hemel Hempstead R.D.C. are finding it difficult to trace ownership of certain common lands and are seeking help from the National Trust. Hertfordshire is truly rich in culture and history, some of it inexplicable as we in Croxley Green know.

* * * *

Parking of Vehicles. Watford are adopting West End tactics in dealing with the parking problem. In Watford, however, vehicles are being pushed into the private streets away from shopping centres, which is scarcely possible in central London. Rickmansworth also has traffic parking problems and we shall be interested to see how they are solved.

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1st CROXLEY GREEN SCOUT GROUP

The Group dates from 1928, when it was started by the late Mr. J. Paterson with six boys. For several years their home was in the old Tank Building in Dickinson Square, familiarly known as "The Tank". Larger accommodation then became necessary and the Headquarters (Group Room) in Watford Road was built by the boys, their parents and friends during 1938/9.

Even in the war years there was steady growth, and the Group were hosts to two Evacuee Troops, and also housed two classes from the school then occupying St. Oswald's Church.

Now the 1st Croxley Group is one of the largest in Hertfordshire, with two Wolf Cub Packs (ages 8 to 11 years), two Boy Scout Troops (11—15), a Senior Scout Troop (15—18), and a Rover Scout Crew (18—25). Twelve Scouters, i.e. Leaders, look after the training of this large family, nearly all having themselves been trained in the Group. In addition there is a branch of the B-P Guild of Old Scouts, and a Parents and Friends Association.

The project now occupying the Group is the completion of its Headquarters. Funds are being raised in a variety of ways. Many well-wishers are buying bricks for the building, or attending the whist drives held for that purpose. And the always popular Annual Scout Show was this year held on four nights: March 11th, 12th, 18th and 19th at the Dickinson Guildhouse.

Further information about the Group will be gladly given by the Group Scoutmaster, Mr. A. Barton-Smith, 7 Dickinson Avenue.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Social Committee are pleased to report that the New Year's Eve Dance at All Saints Hall proved very successful and those who came along unroughly enjoyed themselves despite the fact that a radiogram provided the music.

Unfortunately, the dance held on January 15th was extremely disappointing, due mainly to the bad weather, but those who braved the elements will agree that it was most enjoyable and was worth the effort of turning out.

Please make a note of our future dances:—
April 23rd, May 28th.

CO-OPTION

The following have been co-opted to serve on the Executive Committee of the Association:—Mr. M. L. Watkins, Col. C. E. Rothery-Moss.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Do you know how any of your local Councillors have voted on issues which have come before the Council over the last twelve months? Do you even know what they look like or can you forecast what line they are likely to take during the next twelve months?

The votes of electors in the locality will shortly be sought in connection with local elections. One seat will fall vacant in the North Ward and one in the South Ward. We have always urged everyone to use their vote: we feel that it would be excellent if voters could find out beforehand something about the outlook of the candidates. Some idea might be gained at the Open Meeting to be held on March 30th.

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

(Croxley Green Branch)

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