

# BILLERICAY OBSERVER

Tuesday August 14th, 1962.

Number 118.



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"THE ONLY NEWSPAPER PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN BILLERICAY."

## EMERGENCY BID TO STOP MAIN ROAD BLOCK FAILS BIGGER PROTEST LIKELY NEXT WEEK

A last-minute emergency bid by Billericay Residents' Assn. on Saturday evening, failed to stop residents living on the Southend Road, Billericay, between Mill Road and Armstrong Whitworth's factory, from partially obstructing the road with parked cars on Sunday. However, the residents of the houses did agree not to park their cars several feet from the kerb, but just to park them in a line, with the object of slowing down cars. An emergency meeting of the South Green Committee of Billericay Residents' Association decided to approach the protesters, and ask them to cancel their demonstration in view of the possible road safety hazard. A long meeting was held between the two sides on Saturday evening, when the Residents' Association pointed out that they could not be associated with irresponsible action, but the protesters decided to go ahead with their plans. The attitude of the protesters to the Residents' Assn. appeal was reflected by organiser Mrs. Thomson who said; "We first asked for a footpath five years ago, and we haven't got anywhere yet. The time has come for a protest on our own".

Motorists travelling from both London and Southend were confronted with a line of posters bearing such slogans as "Don't Overtake!", "Slow, Slow", "Beware Children", "No Footpath", and "You May Be The Unlucky Driver!". Along the central part of the section of road in question a short line of cars was parked to one side, also bearing slogans. The reaction of drivers was mixed. Most slowed down, either to read the posters, or because they were forced to by the line of cars. Many buses using the road slowed to a crawl. However, a minority of motorists sounded their hooters, and increased speed. One motorist drove straight at a group of protesters standing by the roadside, narrowly missing them. The occupants of the car shook their fists at the protesters, and the protesters returned the gesture. As the "Observer" goes to press on Sunday afternoon it is reported that most vehicles have been slowed down by the protest, but despite this no Police action has been taken.

It is intended to keep the various posters displayed for the rest of the week, and a petition to the Minister of Transport asking for a footpath is also planned. If there is no result from Sunday's demonstration, then a similar one will be held next Sunday. If a further demonstration is held it will be on a larger scale, as on Sunday the protesters suffered from a lack of cars, as many sympathisers were away. The "Observer" understands that the protesters are particularly concerned by the danger to the twenty-seven children living in the area, caused by lack of a footpath.



ATTEMPT TO GET EXTRA COUNCILLOR  
FOR BILLERICAY FAILS.

An attempt by Independent Councillor John Blair to give Billericay an extra Councillor on Basildon Council at last Thursday week's Council Meeting failed. But the Council approved a proposal for an extra councillor for Basildon's Central Ward. This will bring the number of members on the Council to 29, Billericay having 5 Councillors.

Mr. Blair pointed out that when representation was last under review, it was agreed that the ultimate number of Councillors should be 42. An ultimate electorate of 102,000 to 105,000 was proposed, which would give an average of 2,500 electorate per member, and it was suggested that the Council think in terms of 2,300 to 2,700 per member. To give full effect to this would mean reducing the Council to 26 at the present time, and this was not practical in view of the increasing burden on members of the Council. On the basis of the figures provided, Billericay would have in 1963, on a basis of 5 members, an average electorate per member of 2,550, as against the urban district average of 2,113 per member. In 1966, on the same basis, Billericay would have 2,850 electorate per member, as against an average of 2,422 per member for the whole Urban District. If Billericay was increased to six members now, Fryerns and Wickford Ward would have a lower electorate per member than Billericay, despite the increase in representation in Billericay. The Council had given sympathetic consideration to Pitsea and Laindon because of their large size. A Council of 30 members would allow the retirement of exactly one-third of its members each year, and six members for Billericay would pave the way for its division into two wards. Mr. Blair proposed that the Council gave Billericay an extra member.

Cllr. Wilkins, Chairman of the Finance Committee, which deals with electoral matter, said that he thought that Cllr. Blair's remarks were constructive, and that his proposals were fair and deserved the Council's sympathetic consideration.

Continued In Next Column.

EXTRA COUNCILLOR  
PROPOSAL REJECTED.  
From Column 1.

Mr. Blair's proposal was severely criticised by Cllr. A. T. Dove (Lab.). Cllr. Dove suggested that the question be left until 1965, when the whole district could be reviewed.

Cllr. Mrs. Gadson (Con.) said that she could see Cllr. Blair's line of argument, but the situation in Billericay was not too bad. She was firmly against reducing the Council to 26, and she felt that the question of an extra seat for Billericay should be left until 1965.

When the proposal was put to the vote it was heavily defeated. All members of the Conservative and Labour groups voted against the proposal, only the four Independent Residents voting in favour. The lone Liberal abstained.

RESIDENTS REFUSE TO ATTEND MEETING.

The Executive Committee of Billericay Residents' Association decided on Friday to boycott a meeting to be held in September by Billericay Young Socialists on party politics in local government.

It was pointed out that a recent meeting organised on this subject had been attended by the Vice-Chairman of the Association. At it a number of accusations had been made against the Residents by Mr. Kionel Wernick, Liberal candidate for Billericay Ward, who said that the Association was a breeding ground for Fascists, a cancerous growth on the face of the community and that he "couldn't find words low enough to describe them". It was felt that the Association could not participate in a political platform where remarks of this kind were likely to be made.

It was decided to write to the Young Socialists refusing to send a representative, and objecting to their reference to the Association's alleged entry to local politics in their letter. The Association had entered local government not local politics. In addition the Association had no control over the Independent councillors, as they were Independent, and that they could attend on their own if they wished.

Page 2.



"UNITED FRONT AGAINST CHANGE CANNOT WIN", STATES BUILDER.  
Brightside Planning Appeal.

The united front against change in certain parts of the Billericay area could not win in the end, stated Mr. R. F. Harris of Harris Estates, at a Planning Inquiry into the refusal of Basildon Council to grant planning permission to Harris Estates of Billericay for a development of seven bungalows or chalets at the rear of The Brightside, Billericay, held in Basildon last Tuesday week. Mr. Harris stated that an offer of the right amount soon broke down the front, or the objectors would die or move away.

The Inquiry was conducted by the Minister's Inspector Mr. A. B. Salmon M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E., M.T.P.I., A.M.I.Struct.E., M.I.W.E. who stated that the Council had refused permission as they considered that the development would be an undesirable form of backland development resulting in serious loss of privacy to neighbouring properties, and it would also be a cramped form of development out of keeping with the open character of the area.

Mr. Harris, on behalf of Harris Estates, said that the development was similar, although on a smaller scale to other backland development in the area. No serious loss of privacy would result, because of the large gardens of neighbouring properties. Three out of four of the properties in Mountnessing Road bordering on to the site were willing to sell land for an extension of the scheme. There was no basis for saying that it was out of keeping with the area's character, as it was similar in nature to other sites in the area where the Council had permitted development, although it was on a smaller scale. Two acres of land were locked up on the appeal site, and it was essential that the scheme be permitted.

For the Council Mr. A. R. Hughes questioned Mr. Harris. Mr. Hughes and Mr. Harris came to some disagreement as to whether there was enough room for the proposed access road to the site between two existing properties in Brightside.

Continued In The Next Column.

"PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT UNDESIRABLE"  
Claims Council Representative.

For the Council Mr. A. R. Hughes said that the development was a most undesirable type of backland development. This intensive development of 7 properties on .7 of an acre was out of keeping with the area and un-co-ordinated and unrelated. It would be difficult to construct the access road in between the two properties in Brightside, and this would give the two properties a cramped look. In addition nearby properties suffered a severe loss of privacy, Lindsay Cottage having six properties proposed near one wall. If the development was permitted a precedent would be set up for this type of undesirable development.

In a letter, Buttsbury Residents' Assn. supported the Council's objections to the proposed development. They also drew attention to the fact that it would put a further strain on the already overloaded amenities of the district such as the railways, electricity, and water.

Mr. L. G. V. Howlett of Lindsay Cottage said that he was appalled at the prospect of six dwellings fifty feet from his side wall.

The owners of the houses in Mountnessing Road adjoining the site then stated that they had no intention of selling any land to Mr. Harris, contrary to Mr. Harris's earlier statements.

Commented Mr. Harris; "I didn't expect such a united front against my development. However, an offer of the right amount usually breaks down the united front. Change must eventually come. People always oppose change - this is happening everywhere. It is asking for far too much to expect a village life right in the middle of Billericay".

After the Inquiry the Inspector visited the Appeal site. The Minister's decision and the report of the Inspector will be published when available in the "Observer".

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STOP PRESS NEWS.



# EDITORIAL

Editor:- Wynford P. Grant.

Editorial Offices:-

"Billericay Observer",  
143, Perry Street,  
Billericay,  
Essex.

Phone:- Billericay 1927.

Work on the second booklet in the popular Billericay History Series is now almost complete, and I am now able to give full details to readers. This booklet will deal with the history of the "Mills of Billericay", and will also include the highly amusing story of Billericay's "ghastly miller", Thomas Wood. Wood weighed well over twenty stone, and the story of how he dieted makes interesting reading. The booklet gives details of five mills in and around Billericay, and also attempts to solve the "mystery" of Mill Hill off Perry Street. The publication date is Tuesday September 4th, and the price 6d or 9d by post. The booklet should be on sale in most local newsagents, and I am prepared to deliver copies free of charge anywhere in Billericay. It is intended to print 400 copies of this booklet, and readers who would like a copy are advised to order it as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

I have a few copies left of the fifth print of "Early Billericay", the first booklet in the Billericay History Series. The price is 6d (9d by post) and any reader who would like a copy is asked to contact me as soon as possible. This booklet deals with the history of Billericay from the Stone Age to Roman times, and includes a map of Roman Billericay.

It is hoped to re-start with the issue of September 11th the "Dates For Your Diary" column. This will include details of the meetings of local organisations, and of Basildon Council, and an entertainment guide. Any local organisation which would like to include details of its meetings and activities in this column is asked to get in touch with the Editor. There is no charge.

----- The Editor.

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details of Christ Church Garden  
Fete.

-----  
IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE IN THE  
"BILLERICAY OBSERVER". See Page  
7 for full details.



# FOR THE OLD FOLK

Billericay O.A.P.

On the 1st of August there was an excellent attendance. Sick members were all wished a very speedy recovery. It appeared that Mrs. August was not too well, Mrs. Harding was improving, Mrs. Ransom was still in hospital, Mrs. Dalgarno was as well as could be expected, and was still in hospital. Birthday honours were accorded Mrs. Plumridge. Mr. F. Dawkins brought along his Recorder, and one feature of interest was that he took a recording of "Love's Old Sweet Song" sung by the members, when he last came to entertain them. The members were naturally greatly interested to hear themselves singing. Mr. Dawkins and Mrs. C. Clarke sung some duets together, which caused much laughter among the members. Mrs. Dawkins was the Pianist. The Chairman thanked Mr. Dawkins for an enjoyable afternoon's entertainment.

On the 9th August there was a very good attendance. Sick members were wished a speedy recovery. It appeared that Mrs. August was improving, Mrs. Harding was about the same, Mrs. Ransom was now out of hospital and improving, and Mrs. Dalgarno was about the same. Mrs. Newell was given a cordial welcome back after her long absence through ill health. Two new members were welcomed - Mrs. Beard and Mr. Reeve. The Chairman (Mr. Joseph) then gave details of the coming flower show to be held on Wednesday 22nd August. There would also be an "Arts and Crafts" section as usual. The Secretary stated that the last outing of the year would be to Margate on September 3rd, and members wishing to go were asked to put their names down as soon as possible. The "Fairfield" Concert Party entertained with a musical sketch entitled "Come To The Fair". A most enjoyable afternoon was had by all.

Buttsbury Monday Club.

No meeting was held on Monday August 6th, on account of August Bank Holiday. During the School holidays meetings are being held at Christ Church, Perry Street, by courtesy of the Church authorities. Meetings start at 7 p.m. on Mondays, and new members are welcome.

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REPAIRS TO WATCHES AND CLOCKS.

Page 5.



"BILLERICAY IN THE PAST" by W.P.G.

The office of Constable in Billericay seems to have been a most hazardous and unpopular one in the 17th century, from the evidence in the Quarter Sessions records at the Essex Records Office.

For instance in 1607 John Erdley, a blacksmith living in Great Burstead, was in trouble for assaulting the constable, one George Hills - "wounding him with a lanchinge knyfe so that his life is despaired of".

In the same year William Potter and Margaret Munson were brought before the Court for assaulting Nicholas Welde, Henry Gune, and Robert Salmon - "using threatening and scandalous words and hindering them in the execution of their duty". Margaret Munson lived in part of the "Red Lion" Inn, which stands on the same site today as it did in 1607, and Potter lived almost opposite.

At a later date we find Richard Dowe, Matthew Hedge, and John Smith in trouble for abusing and striking John Thresher in the course of his duty as a constable. John Thresher rented the "Fox" Inn, which probably stood at the corner of Norsey Road and Stock Road, just above the modern "Crown". He paid an annual rental of £6 for this property. It is interesting to note that John's grandson, Samuel Thresher, became one of Billericay's "great men", owning three Inns - the "Red Lion" and the "White Lion" (Shelley's) in the High Street and the "Royal Oak" at South Green, together with other property in the High Street, at South Green, Great Burstead, and Cowbridge.

However, on another occasion, we find John Thresher on the wrong side of the law. On 15th June, 1644, he forcibly broke into the close of Henry Lacey at Great Burstead, and proceeded to unlawfully shoot at Lacey's rabbits. Furthermore, a short time after committing this offence he assaulted Lacey, together with Tho. Baker and James Holybread. Thresher was bound over to keep the peace.

Altogether, the constables had many varied and awkward situations to deal with. One example is an extraordinary affair at Great Burstead in 1605. Apparently John Wattes of Hutton together with John Dabram, Wm. Mallon, Jn. Trevey, and Jn. Mawbrook of Great Burstead, together with other unknown persons, unlawfully assembled at Great Burstead in the nighttime. They then proceeded to pull down the chimney of the house of one Roger Peacocke, putting the highly unfortunate Roger and his household in fear of their lives. They then proceeded to do other unspecified damages to Roger and his wife. For these offences they were bound over to keep the peace. However, their motives for committing this extraordinary offence are not stated. Did they have a genuine grudge against the unfortunate Roger, who was a poor labourer? Or was it sheer hooliganism on a grand scale? Or a mixture of both? We shall never know. However, it is appropriate to remark that hooliganism was far from uncommon in those days.

Although life in "Merrie England" had its advantages when compared with life today, it was noted for its oppression of the lower classes. In 1611 John Tayleford, a local glover, was reported for indulging in pursuits above his station. He had in fact indulged in the high-class sport of coursing. In addition he had dared to keep greyhounds! As the report of his offences remarked; "He being a poore man not fitting to leade that course of life". I wonder if indulging in greyhound racing would be regarded as a sport reserved for the upper classes today?

Continued In The Next Issue.

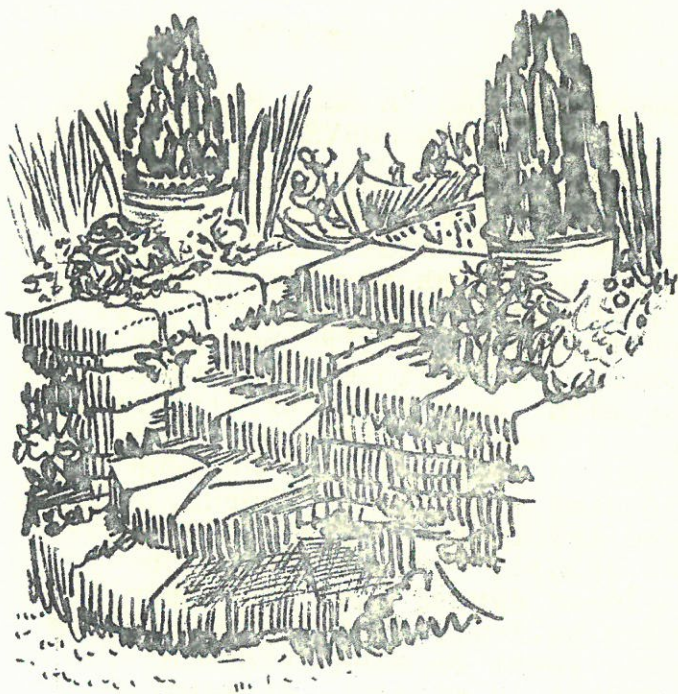
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BILLERICAY TOP TEN - Based on sales of records at Stanwood Radio Ltd. High Street, Billericay. Last time's positions in brackets.

1. DB.4856 - I Remember You (Frank Ifield) (1).
2. DB.4878 - Roses Are Red (Bobby Vinton) (-).
3. HLK.9575 - Things (Bobby Darin) (-).
4. F.11485 - Once Upon A Dream (Billy Fury) (-).
5. POP.1051 - Sealed With A Kiss (Brian Hyland) (-).
6. DB.4870 - Guitar Tango (The Shadows) (-).
7. HLD.9573 - Speedy Gonzales (Pat Boone) (-).
8. R.4928 - Peter and the Wolf (Clyde Valley Stompers) (-).
9. MGM.1165 - Vacation (Connie Francis) (-).
10. CL.15257 - Let There Be Love (Nat King Cole & George Shearing).



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**IMPORTANT  
NOTICE!**

NO "BILLERICAY OBSERVER" WILL BE PUBLISHED ON AUGUST 28th - OWING TO LACK OF NEWS IN AUGUST AND ANNUAL HOLIDAYS. THE NEXT ISSUE WILL BE PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 11th, AND WILL REPORT ALL EVENTS OCCURRING IN THE NEXT MONTH.

FLOODING WORKS "A MERE PALIATIVE", SAYS COUNCIL SURVEYOR.

Following complaints from Billericay Residents' Association that works outside the Roman Catholic Church in Laindon Road, Billericay, were unsatisfactory, and included a gully that runs uphill, the Engineer & Surveyor of Basildon Council has written back to say that the works were not meant to deal with the serious flooding outside the Church, but were merely to fill up holes in the ground. In his letter the Engineer agrees that the works are "mere palitives", and that as such money spent on such intermin measures is wasted. However, a policy which included no intermin measures would be unworkable. The Engineer & Surveyor suggests that the solution to the flooding is to extend the kerb line, and also to provide a high-level footpath.

At their meeting on Friday the Residents' Association agreed to ask for these works to be carried out.

RECREATION GROUND MEETING.

Representatives of Basildon Council met three members of the South Green Committee of Billericay Residents' Association at the Council Chamber, Billericay, on Wednesday to discuss the removal of playground equipment from the South Green Recreation Ground, and the provision of a fence around the ground to protect children from running out into the busy Southend Road. A confidential report on the meeting was given at Friday's Executive Committee meeting of Billericay Residents' Association. The "Observer" understands that the majority of the report is not likely to be made public for some time.

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## LAKE MEADOWS TAKINGS SLUMP.

Tradesmens' takings at Lake Meadows, Billericay, have slumped since Basildon Council closed the Car Park, following a petition signed by over 1,000 residents, two years ago. At peak periods over 700 cars used the Car Park.

Complained boatman, Mr.R.Wise, to the "Observer" on Friday; "I just haven't been able to make a living this year. I shall have to take other employment during the Winter, and as a result I shall not be able to re-condition my boats, and the public will suffer. Normally at this time of year I have all my boats out, and a line of people waiting as well. Since the Car Park was closed I have had only two boats out most of the time. Before the Car Park was closed I used to employ two assistants, but there's barely a living for myself now. I used to have twice the number of boats out all the time. If trade doesn't improve next year I shan't be able to carry on".

Mr.Wise also complained that he now had a rougher type of customer. Hooliganism was also on the increase. No matter how late he stayed at the park, hooligans would let his boats loose, and damage them. Commented Mr.Wise; "The Council don't attempt to do a thing about it. They won't even provide adequate gates and fences".

Asked if the new Car Park proposed for the Industrial Estate would help Mr.Wise said that he thought it would help at the busier periods. However, formerly people would come in their cars for a hour or two in the evening. The new Car Park was too far away from the park for that.

Mr.Wise said that he felt the solution was to re-open the old Car Park with an entrance from Hill House Drive, and an exit via Lake Avenue.

Although almost all Mr.Wise's boats were out when I visited him he assured me that this was most exceptional. "Sometimes I've only taken 3/6d in a whole day", he commented.

The "Observer" understands that the caterers are always concerned about poor trade. They have had to close their restaurant in the evening, owing to the lack of evening visitors.

Continued In Next  
Column.

## TRADESMENS' COMPLAINTS DISMISSED AS "UNUTTERABLE NONSENSE".

Continued From Column 1.

When interviewed on Friday Mr. J.E.Hillyard of Cromwell Avenue, a committee member of Billericay Residents' Association, was quick to dismiss the complaints as "the most unutterable nonsense I've ever heard. He continued; "The park is maintained for the enjoyment of ratepayers. It is not there to provide a lucrative source of income for two businessmen. If it is then turn the Park into half a Car Park, and half a funfair. I'm sure the tradesmen would be highly delighted! Hundreds of people still go the park. They pass my house on the footpath to Lake Meadows every day."

Mr.Hillyard also complained that despite the car parking in Radford Way, people were parking their cars in Cromwell Avenue. There had been over thirty cars in the road on Bank Holiday Monday (a poor day), and five had been there before 9.0 a.m.! One neighbour had been unable to get his car out, and had had to ring the Police! The Council had written to Residents asking them if they would like a "No Waiting" order in their road. Despite the inconvenience it would cause them, the majority had replied in favour as they felt that anything was better than the present situation. The Council had deferred the matter until the effect of the new Car Park could be observed.

Basildon Council have approved an estimate of £14,000 for a Car Park on the Industrial Site next to the Park. It was supposed to have been completed in July, but work has not yet started.

## HEATED SCENES AT COUNCIL MEETING.

There were heated scenes during a Basildon Council Meeting last Thursday week, during a debate on housing policy.

During a speech Cllr.Mrs. Gadson (Con.) accused Cllr.Joe Morgan (Lab.) of being a Right-Wing Communist.

"So what if I am", he replied, "your party has a right wing too - the Fascists".

Retorted Mrs.Gadson; "You think that anyone who owns as much as a shack is a bloated capitalist and ought to be shot".

An uproar in the Labour benches and from the public gallery resulted, and the Chairman (Cllr. Phelps) had to bang his gavel several times to restore order.



OPEN-AIR DANCING IN LAKE MEADOWS?  
It's a possibility!

Open-air dancing may be a feature of Lake Meadows in the future, as a result of a motion passed at Basildon Council's recent meeting.

The motion was moved by Cllr. A.T.Dove (Lab.) who called for bandstands with sound amplification for jazz and other groups, paved areas for open-air dancing and roller skating, "crazy" golf courses, and an extension of flower bedding areas, in order to provide more entertainment in parks. The motion called for priority for the programme, so that work could be started next year.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Kidell (Lab.) who said that vandalism in parks was caused by lack of facilities for youth. Most of his young friends thought he was the only Councillor who hadn't got a beard!

Strong opposition came from Conservative Mrs. C.J. Gadson. She said that the Council was already spending £400,000 a year on parks.

The motion was also strongly opposed by Cllr. Trew, Conservative Chairman of the Parks Committee. He said that there was not enough room in some parks for the proposed facilities, the expense would be high, and a noise nuisance would be caused to nearby houses.

However, with the support of the Independent Residents, Cllr. Dove's motion was carried.

NEW POST FOR BILLERICAY'S M.P.

Mr. Edward Gardner Q.C., Member of Parliament for Billericay, has been appointed Private Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, Sir John Hobson Q.C., M.P. Mr. Gardner served Sir John as Private Parliamentary Secretary when Sir John was appointed Solicitor General earlier in the year.

Mr. Gardner has tabled a motion in the Commons, supported by a number of Conservative back-benchers asking the Government to provide a direct subsidy and passages in Royal Naval ships, and aircraft, to young people who are ready to give voluntary service overseas in the under-developed countries. Mr. Gardner stated that the object of the motion was to persuade the Government to give young people, willing to help others less fortunate, the support they deserved. The one problem preventing volunteers from going overseas was lack of transport.

ROUND AND ABOUT  
by  
"WANDERER".

The Lake Meadows row (Page 9) raises some difficult problems. Whilst sympathising with the tradesmen, I feel that the benefit of the district is more important than their benefit. Any move to re-introduce car parking in Lake Meadows should be vigorously opposed by local residents. A road safety hazard would be caused by cars travelling at speed across the park to or from the car park. In addition valuable recreational land would be used up, and local residents would once again be forced out of the park during the Summer by hordes of visitors. The obvious solution, which should be acceptable to both tradesmen and residents, is the speedy opening of the Industrial Estate Car Park. The Council should ensure that work is started as soon as possible.

Incidentally, I have noticed that a disgusting amount of litter is left by visitors in Lake Meadows and also along the path leading from the Station to Lake Meadows. Obviously more litter bins are needed, and steps should be taken to see that they are used.

Many times in the past the people of Billericay, and their Residents' Association, have been accused of "parochialism". This is of course untrue - Resident Councillors have been to Basildon in their spare time to deal with complaints. However, the charge of "parochialism" could justifiably be levelled against the Basildon councillors. Despite figures produced by Cllr. Blair at the recent Council Meeting to show that Billericay is under-represented on the Council, they flatly turned down a proposal for an extra Councillor for Billericay, whilst happily giving an extra seat to Basildon's Central Ward. Their reason for not giving an extra seat to Billericay - a wish to avoid being "parochial". No comment!

The Billericay Residents' Assn. are right not to prolong their argument with the Liberal Party, by refusing to attend a further meeting. No doubt such a meeting would provide a platform for Mr. Lionel Wernick to utter more of his irresponsible and ill-informed statements, similar to his recent "Fascism" remarks about the Residents -- "Wanderer".