

BILLERICAY OBSERVER

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"THE ONLY NEWSPAPER PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN BILLERICAY."

BILLERICAY'S FUTURE HANGS IN BALANCE

As special Panels of Basildon Council consider maps and reports in connection with the review of the Billericay Development Plan, in the next few weeks, the future of Billericay hangs in the balance. The shape of development in Billericay in the next ten years or so depends on the decisions of the Council, and the next ten years could well decide the face of Billericay for the next hundred years. Among the major decisions the Council have to take is whether, in view of the strain on such public amenities as transport, electricity, and water, further large-scale development should be allowed in the Billericay area during the next decade; and whether the large Queens Park area should be thrown open for development, or whether it should be reserved for second-generation housing. The last decision is probably one of the most controversial the Council will ever have to take.

One man who is firmly against further development is Mr. J. Hopkins, prominent committee member of Billericay Residents' Assn. Speaking at a conference of local Residents' Associations at Upminster last Saturday week he warned delegates; "Basildon Council will not be able to provide sufficient amenities to keep up with the natural population increase let alone any new influx from outside. I don't care whether British Railways introduce double-deck trains or build platforms a mile long, they just won't be able to cope. This is not a 'dog in the manger' attitude - it's just plain logic", he concluded. Mr. Hopkins advocated a period of consolidation, during which no building would be allowed, and amenities would be able to catch up with the population increase (8,500 in 1955; 20,000 in 1962 - the original estimate for 1971 was 16,700).

Mr. Hopkins's views do not represent official Residents' Association policy - as yet. But many prominent members of the Residents' Association, and Independent Councillors, have expressed similar views in the past. Indeed, in the next few weeks, the Association are expected to announce an official policy on the review of the Development Plan - a policy that is expected to advocate a halt in development, to let water, transport, telephone, electricity, gas, sewerage, lighting and other public services to catch up with development. The final decision on this subject will be vital to the future of the town.

STOP PRESS NEWS.

BATTLE OF SOUTH GREEN GOES A STAGE FURTHER.

The year-old "Battle of South Green" between Billericay Residents Association and Basildon Council, over the removal of the hedge and play equipment from South Green Recreation Ground was taken a stage further at last Thursday week's Basildon Council meeting, when the Council asked the Parks Committee to re-consider a decision not to replace the hedge, following a meeting with representatives of the Residents.

The matter was brought up by Cllr. H.E. Wilkins (Ind.) who said that the original good intentions of the Council had boomeranged. Now that the hedge had been taken away the Council no longer had a Recreation Ground, but a field. Removing the hedge had resulted in no improvement in road safety, for the footpath round the Ground had not been provided. There was no reason why the Council should not provide a new, low hedge, ten feet back from the road. Concluded Cllr. Wilkins; "The Council have been wrong all the way on this - legally and morally."

Support for Cllr. Wilkins came from Labour group leader Cllr. R. Rice. He commented; "I can see the point Cllr. Wilkins is making. It is nothing less than an open field. If you take away a play space you should provide a new one."

Commented Conservative Cllr. Mrs. C.J. Gadson; "This is a bad cause put forward by the Residents Association for the Residents Association. The Police, Road Safety Organisation, and Council all agreed that the hedge should be removed, and there were many representations about the danger to children."

Commented Parks Chairman Cllr. Trew; "This was a very unsafe Recreation Ground. It is not true to say that a new play space has not been provided, for we have provided a new one in Langham Crescent".

With Labour support the Independent Resident proposal for reference back was carried.

REGISTER OF ELECTORS.

Preparation of the draft lists for the 1963 Register of Electors are nearly complete, but about 7,000 forms have not been returned. To make sure of your vote occupants should complete and return their forms to the Council Offices as soon as possible.

LOSS OF AMENITY WOULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED STATES THE MINISTER.

The Minister of Housing & Local Government has decided that if development by Harris Estates of six semi-detached dwellings and one detached dwelling on about 0.7 of an acre was allowed the resulting loss of amenity would not be justified. The site was the subject of a recent Local Inquiry, presided over by Mr. A.B. Salmon M.I.C.E., M.T.P.I., A.M.I. Struct. E., M.I.W.E.

The Inspector in his report recommended that the appeal be dismissed because the proposal was for a cramped form of development out of keeping with that existing in the immediate neighbourhood, and the resulting loss of amenity would not be justified.

The Minister saw no reason to disagree with the Inspector's recommendations, and he therefore dismissed the appeal.

RESIDENTS ASKED "TO HAVE A LITTLE THOUGHT".

Residents who live in Southend Road, Billericay, between Mill Road and Armstrong Whitworth's, were asked to have a little thought about the way they parked their cars by Cllr. Mrs. C.J. Gadson at the recent Council Meeting. She said that residents had been parking their cars several feet from the verge, and were thus adding to the dangers of the road. "I don't think it's too much to ask them", she concluded.

Mrs. Gadson had been asked by Cllr. K.C. Cook if any approach had been made to residents about the dedication of land needed for highway improvements, and the provision of a footpath.

Mrs. Gadson said that at the moment the Engineer & Surveyor was in consultation with the County Surveyor. All this would take a little time.

As part of a recent campaign to persuade Basildon Council to provide them with a footpath residents parked their cars some feet from the verge to slow down traffic, and thus draw attention to their plight.

Two members of Billericay Business & Professional Womens' Club are to attend the 24th A.G.M. of the National Federation of B. & P.W. Clubs on Scarborough on Friday. They are Miss Q. Jackson (Delegate) and Miss Molly Perry (Observer). Various motions will be discussed, and plans for next year's Silver Jubilee.

LEAGUE OF FRIENDS REPORT "WONDERFUL YEAR" ----- A.G.M. REPORT.

"We have had a wonderful year and some wonderful work has been done by the officers of the League" said Chairman Mr.S.C.Squires at the 8th Annual General Meeting of St.Andrews' Hospital League of Friends held in the W.I.Hall last Wednesday. He continued; "We get utmost co-operation from Matron and the Hospital staff. Recently a number of people have said what a wonderful organisation the League is, but when working for such a good cause it is bound to be successful. This is the main reason for its success, but almost as good a reason is that the public have elected good working committees", concluded Mr.Squires.

In her report Secretary Mrs.I. Peach said that the League had had another successful year. All the usual functions which included Fete, Cake Sale, Jumble Sale, Concert, and Dinner/Dance had been held, which had all added large amounts to the funds. Christmas gifts had again been bought for patients in hospital and staff on duty at Christmas, and silver spoons had been presented to babies born in Hospital on Christmas Day. £125 had been set aside for a Patients' Call System, which would be installed in the future.

The Membership Secretary (Mr. J.D.Harrison) reported that membership had now reached 252, compared with 210 last year, and this had brought in an income of £128.6.0. in subscriptions.

The Treasurer (Mr.C.J.Brooks) reported that there had been an income of £1,600 during the year, £170 more than last year. £48 had been spent on administration, and £454 on benefits for the Hospital. The League had a splendid balance of £2,600, £1,000 of which was earmarked for a Staff Recreation Hall, and £125 for a Patients' Signalling System. Also over £100 would be spent again this year on Christmas gifts.

The six retiring members were re-elected to the committee.

NEW JOB FOR M.P.

Last week it was announced that the Queen had appointed Commander E.L.Gardner Q.C. (formerly R.N.V.R.) to be Deputy Chairman of the Court of Quarter Sessions for the County of Kent. Commander Gardner is Conservative Member of Parliament for Billericay.

THREE GOOD CAUSES WILL BENEFIT FROM NEXT YEAR'S CARNIVAL.

A public meeting called by Billericay Carnival Association at Archer Hall, Billericay, decided that three good causes will benefit from the proceeds of next year's Billericay Carnival. The proportions will be decided after the Carnival. The three causes to benefit (chosen from a list of ten) are:- Guide Dogs For The Blind Fund, Billericay British Legion Christmas Benevolent Fund, and Basildon Urban District After-Care Association. The hope was expressed, that if enough money to train one Guide Dog was raised, the dog would be given to a local person, if possible.

At the meeting a cheque for £532-3-1d, representing the proceeds of this year's Carnival, to Dr.F.W.B.Rilstone, representing Billericay Recreation Rooms, by Mr.W.W.Ball, Chairman of the Carnival Association.

17th CENTURY BUILDING TO COME DOWN ----- COUNCILLORS PROTEST.

The news that Nos.122-124, High Street, a 17th century building, included in the list of buildings of architectural and historical interest, dismayed Billericay councillors at last Thursday week's Council Meeting. The building, which is uneconomic to repair, will be replaced with a shop development.

First to protest was Cllr.W.J. Blair (Ind.) He said that he was dismayed at the proposal, and he hoped that in future owners would receive assistance under the Local Authorities Assistance Act for historic buildings.

Also against the proposal was Finance Committee Chairman Cllr. H.E.Wilkins (Ind.) He said that the Council should judge the High Street as a whole, and not just take out one or two buildings, and demolish them. It was ridiculous to take down one building and put up another with no improved off-loading facilities. If the off-loading facilities were to be improved there was some merit in it. Concluded Cllr.Wilkins; "I am against demolition just for the sake of demolition."

Cllr.Mrs.Gadson said that the Council leaned over backwards to protect the High Street but these premises were uneconomic to repair. Cllr.Pegrum (Chairman of Planning) said that the building had been greatly altered over the years, and no longer retained its original characteristics.

EDITORIAL

Editor:- Wynford P. Grant.

Editorial Offices:-

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

Phone:- Billericay 1927.

Since the last issue of the "Observer" a further 45 copies of the "Mills of Billericay", No.2 in the Billericay History Series, have been sold, making a total sale to date of nearly 600 copies.

A further 65 copies of the 1st booklet in the series - "Early Billericay" - have also been sold since the last issue, making a total sale of 730 copies to date. This booklet is now in its 8th Impression.

Both booklets are priced at 6d plus 3d postage.

----- The Editor.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

What's On In & Around Billericay.

MEETINGS - Billericay British Legion A.G.M., Rose Hall, Chapel Street, 8 p.m., Wed. 24th October. All ex-service men and women are welcome "End The Transport Muddle" - Mrs. Rita Smythe, Prospective Labour Candidate for Billericay, Mr. Lane member of N.U.R. national executive, and Transport House representative will speak at this meeting organised by Billericay Labour Party in the W.I. Hall, St. Edith's Lane, High Street, on Wed. 24th October at 8 p.m. North Area Committee (Stock Road/Norsey Road etc.) of Billericay Residents' Assn., next meeting at "Robin Lodge", Stock Road, Friday 26th October at 8 p.m. Next Meeting of Billericay Residents' Assn. Womens' Section at "Orchard Cottage", Station Road, on 29th October, 1962. All welcome.

CONCERT - In aid of St. Andrews Hospital League of Friends at Archer Hall, Thursday October 25th.

JUMBLE SALE - In aid of St. Andrews Hospital League of Friends at Rose Hall on November 2nd.

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Advertisement Rates from the Editor.

FOR THE OLD FOLK

Billericay O.A.P.

At the meeting on the 10th October there was an excellent attendance. With regard to sick members it appeared that Mrs. Joseph was to have another eye operation; Mrs. Rackham was very ill; Mrs. Wakeling was about the same. Mrs. Train and Mrs. F. Smith were welcomed back after their long absences through illness. Birthday honours were accorded Mrs. Parkin. The Secretary thanked all who had helped at the Dinner with the decorating of the tables; also to the Concert Party and all helpers with teas. He then mentioned that the outing to "Oklahoma" was almost fully booked up. Entertainment was given by the Kings Road (Brentwood) Concert Party. Tea hostesses were Mesdames Wiltshire, Horne, and Flatt.

There was an excellent attendance on the 17th. With regard to sick members it was stated that Mrs. Joseph had just undergone another operation to her eyes and was as well as could be expected; Mrs. Rackham was a little better. Mrs. Wakeling was welcomed back to the meeting after her long absence through sickness. All sick members were wished a speedy recovery. The Secretary stated that there were only two seats left for "Oklahoma", and he also asked for the names of those who wanted to go to the Pantomime at the Palladium. He then read out a letter from a very old member and Vice-President of the Branch - Mr. C.W. Haynes - wherein he sent his best wishes and remembrances to everyone at the Branch, and enclosed a donation of £1.1.0. towards Branch funds. The Secretary reminded members that the Annual General Meeting was to be held on October 24th. Community Singing was led by Mrs. Dawkins at the Piano.

Buttsbury Monday Club.

On October 6th the first Saturday afternoon meeting was most enjoyable, there being a very good attendance. A gift of a tin of biscuits was given by Mrs. Bennett, and a game of Bingo was played.

On the 13th a very pleasant time was had by some forty members, a successful raffle being held with a sponge cake given by Mrs. Leswell, and a necklace by Mrs. Smith.

On the 16th 40 members enjoyed an afternoon tour, visiting Thaxted Church and calling at Braintree for tea, arriving home about 6 p.m. All members were very pleased to see Mrs. Bond back with them after such a long illness.

DE-ZINCIFICATION WARNING - A warning about the trouble and expense resulting from the de-zincification of hot and cold water systems is given in a statement issued by Buttsbury Residents' Assn. The statement warns local residents that the water supplied in the area attacks zinc fittings in domestic water systems. This results in a build-up of zinc carbonate and hydrated zinc oxide around the inside surface of the fitting, eventually blocking the system. Hot water systems are particularly affected. The statement concludes; "We understand that the only really effective cure is to replace all brass unions, joints etc. by gun-metal or similar alloy fittings."

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THIS WEEK'S HISTORY QUERY (Answered by Wynford Grant).

Q; "Could you tell me the origin of the name 'Billericay'. Is it just coincidence that the two christian names - 'Bill' and 'Eric' - are included in the name?"

This is one of the greatest puzzles connected with the history of Billericay. Even the English Place Name Society have failed to find the answer.

Among the suggestions for the Roman name are "Villa Erica" (the town on the heath), "Bellerius Bastion" (camp of a Roman general Bellerius) and "Bello Castrum" (fair camp). A suggestion that "Villa Erica" was corrupted into "Billericay" has received a fair amount of support.

In the Middle Ages it was called by the names "Byliricay", "Billerykay", and "Billeryke".

The Essex historian Morant suggests that it is of Norman-French origin, and states that in 1343 it was called "Beleuca", "Baleuga" or "Banleuga", denoting a territory round a borough or manor. John Norden calls it "Billerecrais" on his 1594 map.

Another map calls it "Billericay alias Build Upon Cave". It is known that there are a number of caves below the High Street, but there is no support from any other source for this suggestion.

A very interesting suggestion is put forward by several sources. Apparently at one time there was a town in Kent called "Billerica", situated in a very similar position to that of Billericay i.e. an isolated hill standing above an undulating plain. It is therefore suggested that "Billerica" was an old word meaning "hill above the plain" or something similar. Personally, I consider that this is one of the most likely suggestions, but there is no documentary evidence to prove it.

By the 17th and 18th centuries the standard form used was "Billerica", and this is the spelling Billericay's sister town in America uses. The additional "y" does not seem to have been in common use until the 19th century.

The occurrence of the two christian names mentioned is just sheer coincidence. The true origin still remains a mystery.
Editor's Note; I will do my best to answer all history queries sent to me.

BILLERICAY TOP TEN (Supplied by Stanwood Radio Ltd. of Billericay).

1. F.11494 - Telstar (The Tornados) (1).
2. HLU.9591 - Rain Until September (Carole King) (3).
3. POP.1060 - Sheila (Tommy Roe) (5).
4. DB.4882 - What Now My Love (Shirley Bassey) (-).
5. HL.9851 - Loco-Motion (Little Eva) (6).
6. SS.122 - Sherry (The Four Seasons) (-).
7. RCA.1303 - She's Not You (Elvis Presley) (-).
8. POP.1064 - You Don't Know Me (Ray Charles) (7).
9. It'll Be Me (Cliff Richard) (4) 10. Ramblin' Rose (Nat Cole) (-)

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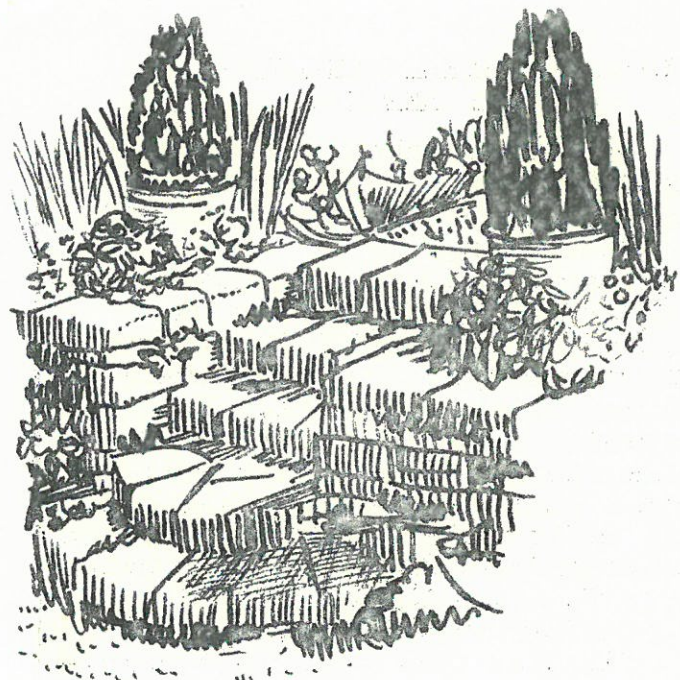
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END THE TRANSPORT MUDDLE !

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NOISE AND SMELL COMPLAINTS AT COUNCIL MEETING.

Complaints about a noise and a smell were made by Independent Councillors at Basildon Council's recent meeting.

Cllr.Mrs.J.Lunt complained that a noise from a factory on the Billericay Industrial Estate was annoying people on the Cromwell and Lake Avenue estates. She described it as a high-pitched whine, like a siren, that went on from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Cllr.Mrs. Lunt criticised a Health Committee decision "to keep the matter under review". The Council agreed to re-consider the matter.

Cllr.Ken Cook said that complaints about the smell from the sewage works in Mountnessing Road were still coming in, despite the installation of a new spray system. The smell was really strong at times.

Mrs.Gadson said that she was afraid that whatever the Council did they would never lose the smell altogether.

TREE SCREEN WILL NOT BE REPLACED.

Trees which screen Lake Meadows from Billericay Industrial Estate, which are to be removed in a dam improvement scheme, will not be replaced Cllr.W.J.Blair was told at Basildon Council's meeting.

Cllr.Blair said that he was shaken by the news. It would ruin the park.

The Council agreed to consider the matter again.

MONEY SHORTAGE MEANS NO FOOTPATH.

Shortage of money had stopped Basildon Council from constructing a temporary footpath in Laindon Road, Billericay, said Cllr.Mrs. C.J.Gadson at Basildon Council's recent meeting. She was replying to Cllr.Clare Gibbs, who praised the decision to submit plans for a long-term improvement to the County Council, but said that parents were concerned about their children's safety in the time before work started on the long-term project.

SCOUT BAZAAR RAISED £100 - An Autumn Bazaar organised by 2nd Billericay Scout Group in the Recreation Rooms last Saturday week raised £100 towards their target of £120 re-roofing their H.Q. in Laindon Road. A wide range of goods were on sale at the Bazaar, which was open all day.

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Local History.

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HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

An interesting talk on Pest Control was given to forty members at the W.I.Hall last Monday by Miss Kemp of Pan Britannica Industries. Miss Kemp told members of remedies for numerous pests and diseases of flowers and vegetables from wireworm to sawflies. It was most important to follow the directions given by manufacturers of sprays and chemical powders. It was also essential to measure carefully the amount of water to be mixed with sprays. Most weed and pest chemicals were fatal to fish and care must be taken not to allow the fish pond to become infected. When spraying, especially fruit trees, it is advisable to wear old clothing as some chemicals will severely damage clothing materials.

Capt. J.J.A. Tesoirere (Retd.) presided.

The next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting to be held on 19th November.

Please REMEMBER when submitting Society reports to leave out NO essential detail and all unnecessary detail, to type them or write them legibly, and to send them in by 7 p.m. on Friday evenings.

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OTHER GIFTS TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION ----- COME AND SEE!

NORSEY WOODS APPEAL.

Land which forms part of Norsey Woods, Billericay, is the subject of a Town Planning Inquiry at Basildon Council Offices, 88, Town Square, Basildon, on Wednesday 31st October at 10.30 a.m.

The appellant - Mrs. D. J. French of The Esplanade, Maylandsea - wanted to develop the land - in Danepit Drive - for residential purposes. Basildon Council, however, refused permission on the following grounds

1. "The site is outside the areas allocated for development on the County Development Plan and furthermore is intended to form part of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Written Statement accompanying the County Development Plan indicates that in order to achieve the purposes of the Metropolitan Green Belt it is essential to retain and protect the existing rural character of the areas so allocated, and that new building will only be permitted outside existing settlement in the most exceptional cases and when required for agricultural or allied purposes."

2. "The site is within an area the subject of a Tree Preservation Order, and the development would involve clearance of the site to the detriment of the character of the area".

3. "The site does not have proper means of access to a metalled road."

The Inquiry is open to the public.

MAGICIAN'S ATTEMPT TO PREDICT NEWSPAPER HEADLINES.

Billericay Magician Harry Baron, a member of the Inner Magic Circle, made a forecast the other Friday evening. Before a number of local business and professional people in the Chantry Cafe, he predicted the headlines which will appear in an evening newspaper on October 25th, the night of St. Andrews Hospital League of Friends Variety Concert at the Archer Hall. The forecast was placed in a number of sealed envelopes, and signed by three people, and the envelopes were then placed in the vaults of a local bank. Nobody will know how correct the prediction is until the concert when the envelopes will be opened before the audience. All proceeds from the Variety Concert will go towards the work of the League of Friends.

ROUND AND ABOUT

by
"WANDERER".

Within the next few months decisions that will affect the face of Billericay for many years to come will be taken by Basildon Council in connection with the review of the County Development Plan. It is the duty of every Billericay resident to take an interest in these plans, and if events in the past are any guide I am sure that a great deal of interest will be shown by local people.

Personally, I think that only small-scale development should be allowed in Billericay during the next decade.

I know some people will shout "dog in the manger"! However, they should remember that Billericay has already exceeded its estimated population for 1971 by 3,300, and that Billericay has increased by 11,500 people in the last seven years. Nobody can say that Billericay hasn't more than played its part in helping the national housing problem. The minority who advocate further large-scale development should remember that it is already almost impossible to get on a train from Billericay in the rush hour; that local schools are full to bursting point; that Essex has an acute water shortage.

I know that some people will say that local industry is the answer. But Billericay's vast Industrial Estate has only managed to find employment for a few hundred people, most of them moved down with the factories anyway.

It should also be remembered that the second generation, the present teenagers, will soon want houses of their own in Billericay, and they too will travel on the trains and overload the water supply. That cannot be helped. Land must be put aside for them - which is why I think that Queens Park should not be developed for another ten years. Basildon Council should concentrate on the needs of local people, and stop the influx from outside for a while. "Consolidation not Expansion", should be their motto for the next decade.

Development must not be allowed in Norsey Woods at any cost (see this page). Residents should attend the Inquiry and express their opinions on this vital subject ---- "Wanderer".