

BILLERICAY OBSERVER

Tuesday 6th November, 1962.

Number 123.



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"THE ONLY NEWSPAPER PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN BILLERICAY."

NORSEY WOODS APPEAL

Land which forms part of Norsey Woods, Billericay, was the subject of a Town Planning Appeal at Basildon on Wednesday. Mrs. D.J. French of The Esplanade, Maylandsea, was appealing against Basildon Council's decision to refuse to allow permission for residential development at the site in Danepit Drive, off Deerbank Road.

For the Council it was stated that permission had been refused as the site was outside the areas allocated for development on the County Development Plan and furthermore was intended to form part of the Metropolitan Green Belt; the site was within the area of a Tree Preservation Order, and the development would involve clearance of the site to the detriment of the character of the area; the site did not have access to a proper metalled road. For the Council the Assistant Clerk (Mr. A.R. Hughes) said that he felt it would be a retrograde step to carry out the development without connecting it to the main sewer, but this would be very difficult as the site was very low.

For the appellant it was stated that several appeals had been refused, basically because the Council claimed that the site was in an area subject to a Tree Preservation Order. A letter had now been received, however, from the Council which admitted a slight difference between the Billericay Town Map, and the map showing the line of the Tree Preservation Order. As a result the majority of the site was, in fact, outside the order line.

The decision of the Minister will be made known in due course.

COUNCIL MAKE TREE PRESERVATION ORDER.

At a recent meeting of Basildon Council's Development & Planning Committee the Engineer & Surveyor reported on an outline application for development of "The Spinney", Stock Road, which included a copse situated between the site and St. Johns Playing Fields, Stock Road, Billericay. It was thought that the copse concerned formed a most attractive group of trees and should be preserved. The Committee therefore authorised the making of a Tree Preservation Order in respect of the copse.

The Committee also considered an application for the temporary use of "The Haven", Springfield Road, Billericay as a Sunday School/Meeting Hall, and outline application for the erection of a Church. The Committee decided that the application should be advertised so that local residents and other interested persons could make their views known, and the application would then need to be submitted to Essex County Council, as it did not conform with the provisions of the County Development Plan.

ALL LEGION'S EGGS IN ONE BASKET.

Members of Billericay British Legion were told by their Chairman Mr. N.W. Alston, at their Annual General Meeting last Wednesday week; "I am perturbed by the state of affairs - not the state of the balance sheet - but that all our eggs are in one basket, and the golden egg is Old Time Dancing. This has been bringing in the money, and, of course we are delighted, but we must not let ourselves be lulled into a false sense of security. The fact is that the whist drives, through force of circumstances, have not brought in a lot of money despite the very hard work of the organisers. I do feel we have been depending too much on the old time dancing. We have been running it for about twelve years, and during that time we have received something in the region of £4,000." Appealed Mr. Alston; "Can we please have something else done to raise money, so that it does not appear to all be coming from one direction."

Mr. Alston reminded members; "We are here as a benevolent organisation, not as a social one. To help ex-Servicemen and widows is our aim. If I am going to be Chairman of the Branch, then the benevolent work has to come first and foremost." The other functions run by the branch had to be to bring in the money to enable them to carry on the benevolent work.

Mr. Alston concluded by thanking officers and committee, and all those who had assisted with the work of the Legion in the past year.

The President (Mr. A.A. Peart) recalled that last year he had asked for bright ideas to raise money to wipe off the debt on the hall, which had been improved and repaired. They had had considerable help through various activities, but some of them had not been such a financial success as he would have liked them to be. However, the Legion went on, and that was important as there were still over 700,000 disabled and widow pensioners. He hoped they would be able to increase membership among the younger generation, so that the Legion's work could be carried on in the district. The branch was still willing to receive bright ideas to raise money.

Continued In Next Column.

BRITISH LEGION A.G.M.

From Column 1.

Mr. Peart pointed out that the hall had been re-decorated by a small group of members, and this had represented a major saving of money. It cost £3 a week to keep the hall open on Wednesdays for members' recreation evenings, and he hoped that members and other ex-Servicemen would support this evening. He offered to give cups for snooker and darts competitions, if members were interested. He concluded by thanking the Womens' Section for all the work they had done, especially for Poppy Day. The Branch would not be able to get along without them.

Mr. S.R. Forder (Secretary) deplored the lack of interest in the Wednesday recreational meetings and the drop in attendance at Executive Committee meetings. The normal attendance at the Wednesday recreation meetings was eight, and Executive Committee attendance was down to 61%. There were many important things to be discussed at Executive Committee meetings, and the attendance was disappointing. Lettings of the hall had improved, but they could be better. The Whist Drives had been far less successful - the weekly profit was about 7/6d, for good prizes were offered. The football competition had also declined, and these two matters would have to be given the most serious consideration.

Mr. Meeson (Treasurer) said that the overdraft had dropped from last year's figure of £151. 17.0d to £131. 5.8d. Lettings produced £185-6-9d but the hall did not run itself by the lettings, as the cost was nearly £270 a year.

Mr. P.C. Munn, Service Committee Secretary, said that the calls on the service side had not been any greater, but he had had two new cases to deal with.

For the Recreation Committee Mr. D. Mortlock said that at the start of the year they had planned a large range of activities. Two coach outings had had to be cancelled, because of lack of support. They relied largely on outside support - it was the old, old story of apathy. Mr. Mortlock concluded by saying he thought that it was absolutely degrading to have to go to the Carnival for money for the Benevolent Fund, because members of the Branch didn't support the money-raising activities. Officers and committee were elected.

WILL BILLERICAY STATION CLOSE?

Mr. R. F. Lane, National Union of Railwaymen Executive Member, was unable to confirm or deny a statement in a leaflet issued by the Stratford Workshops "Save Your Railways" Committee that Southend to Liverpool Street would be a non-stopping line, at a meeting on the Future of British Railways organised by Billericay Labour Party in the W.I. Hall last Wednesday week. Mr. Lane told a large audience that Dr. Beeching's policy was to withdraw long-distance stopping trains, but to retain commuter services. It was difficult to say which class Billericay Station came under.

Mr. Lane was introduced by Mrs. Rita Smythe, former Mayor of Edmonton, and Prospective Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Billericay, whose father was a railwayman.

Mr. Lane forecast that higher rail fares, especially for commuters, dearer coal, and no summer services would be likely if Dr. Beeching's proposals were adopted by the Government. Most of East Anglia, Scotland, and the West of England would lose their rail services, and it would be difficult to go on holiday, as most lines to seaside resorts would be closed.

As a result of the 1953 Act passed by the Conservative Government the established system of dealing with parcels and goods was ruined, and restrictions were placed on railway workshops.

Before there was a very satisfactory arrangement for borrowing money to carry out the modernisation programme, but the Act had placed a restraint on capital expenditure, and the modernisation programme was blocked.

An alteration in Government policy meant that the Railways now had to borrow money in the open market. The interest payments incurred were £30M a year, and they rose to £102M in 1961. "We now have the ridiculous situation of the industry borrowing money at market rates to pay the interest on the money borrowed for the modernisation programme, as well as borrowing money at market rates for modernisation", said Mr. Lane.

The rail side of the British Transport Commission had made a profit of £34½M in 1953, and in 1961 a deficit of £87M.

Continued In Next Column.

RAILWAYS MEETING. From Column 1.

Mr. Lane said that his Union felt sure that the Railways could be made into a paying concern - but not by dismantling the industry and demoralising the workers. The whole trouble stemmed from the outlook that profit should come first. Surely it was time we realised that the railways were a public service. Rural post offices didn't pay, but they weren't closed.

Turning to the recent one-day strike Mr. Lane said that Dr. Beeching apparently did not recognise the right of the Unions to negotiate. The Union recognised that there had to be fewer staff, but they were going to ensure that the redundant men were justly treated. They had drawn up a 17-point plan for the railways. They did not like to inconvenience the public, but if they got no satisfaction they would feel free to use their industrial strength again.

Discussing Dr. Beeching's economy proposals Mr. Lane said that they recognised that certain uneconomical lines had to be closed but this should only be done if an alternative means of transport was provided. Under this arrangement 19% of British Railways had so far been closed.

Dr. Beeching also wanted coal delivered to large central yards, as it was uneconomical to deliver to local yards in small quantities. This would mean that coal merchants delivery expenses would be higher, and no doubt coal prices would be increased to compensate for this.

Another recommendation was the abolition of the national parcels services as this was not paying its way. Dr. Beeching had also told the N.U.R. executive that fares would have to go up, as passengers were not paying sufficient return on capital expenditure.

Members of the audience asked various questions.

Footnote; British Railways statistics experts have been counting passengers using Billericay Station during the past few weeks. As Billericay is one of the most heavily used stations in the Eastern Region there are no closure proposals, but the goods service has been classed as uneconomical and may be withdrawn. Intermediate stations such as Maryland may well be closed.

EDITORIAL

Editor:- Wynford P. Grant.

Editorial Offices:-

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

Phone:- Billericay 1927.

An important announcement regarding the future of the "Billericay Observer" is expected to be made in the paper, in the near future.

Since the last "Observer" a further thirty copies of the "Mills of Billericay", and a further twenty copies of "Early Billericay" have been sold. The total sale of "Early Billericay" to date is 750 copies, and the total sale of "The Mills of Billericay" 630 copies. A further impression of 50 copies of the "Mills of Billericay" has been issued.

----- The Editor.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

What's On In & Around Billericay.

NEXT BASILDON COUNCIL MEETING -
Thursday 22nd November at 6.50
p.m. in the Old Council Chamber,
High Street, Billericay.

BAZAARS & SALES OF WORK Christ
Church, Perry Street, Christmas
Sale at the Church, Saturday 24th
November, admission 3d. All
proceeds in aid of New Church Fund
..... Billericay Congregational
Church Gift Day & Bazaar,
Saturday 24th November at 3 p.m.,
Mayflower Hall, Chapel Street.
Concert & Variety Evening at
7.30 p.m., programme 2/-.

MEETINGS - Billericay Horticultural
Society, Annual General Meeting,
Friday 19th November at W.I. Hall.
Billericay Residents' Assn. meeting
to form Central Area Committee at
Billericay Recreation Rooms, High
Street, Friday November 16th at
8 p.m.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE - Next year's
Essex Records Office exhibition at
Ingatestone Hall will be on the
subject of "Georgian Essex".

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ADVERTISMENT RATES from the Editor.

FOR THE OLD FOLK

Billericay O.A.P.

Mr. Joseph presided at the Annual General Meeting on October 24th. Sick members were wished a very speedy recovery. Mrs. Joseph was now recovering slowly, and Mrs. Rackham was improving. The Chairman thanked everyone who had helped during the year in whatever job they had done. The Secretary said that he also wished to thank everyone who had helped with various jobs throughout the year, and said that he was sorry that the Club had lost so many old members during the year. He hoped that there would be less sickness during the coming year. He gave details of the Pantomime at the Palace Theatre, Westcliffe, and asked all those who wished to go to put their names down as soon as possible. Mr. Spencer, the new Chairman, read the minutes of the last A.G.M. As there were no matters arising, he signed the minutes as a true record. He then called upon the Treasurer for his report and balance sheet. Mr. Lewis stated that the club was in a fairly good financial state, but had to keep working to help with concessions for the Outings, Christmas Dinner, and Christmas Tea Party. For the auditors Mrs. Webb said that the books were in good order, and very clear. Election of officials and committee:- Mr. Spencer (Chairman), Mr. Riches (Secretary - he wished to resign but as no one volunteered to take over his job he agreed to continue for the time being), Mr. Lewis (Treasurer - he also wished to resign, but no volunteers for his job came forward), Mr. Jueitt (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. Charlesworth (Sub. Collector), Mrs. C. Clark (Social Secretary), Mrs. R. Hill (Canteen Supervisor), and Mr. G. Byron (Horticultural Secretary). Committee:- Mesdames Kitsell, Bradley, Horne, and Messrs. Arney, Charlesworth, and Plumridge.

At the meeting on the 31st Mr. Spencer presided. Sick members were wished a speedy recovery; Mrs. Joseph was now out of hospital and improving. Mr. Riches stated that as no one had volunteered to take over the job of Secretary, he would continue until someone volunteered. Mr. Lewis, the Treasurer, would do likewise until someone took over his job. The Secretary thanked Mr. Joseph, the retiring Chairman, for his work for the club. He also thanked Mr & Mrs. Jueitt for taking over the Raffle, and wished them the same success that Mr. Plumridge and Mr. Wiltshire had enjoyed. Two new members were welcomed - Mr. Woodage and Mr. McLean. The Branch was entertained by the "Cracker-jacks" Concert Party.

Buttsbury Monday Club.

On Saturday 27th October a very interesting talk was given by Mr. R. Hansford on Lloyds Insurance Brokers. A raffle was held with a hat given by Mrs. Smith and a box of mince pies made by Master Anthony Rainbird. Birthday greetings were extended to Mrs. Cracknell. Mrs. Bond had had to go in hospital again for a short spell, and members wished her well. The Christmas pantomime outing has been arranged for January 5th, Tea was served by Mrs. Rainbird and Mrs. Hardwicke.

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REPAIRS TO WATCHES AND CLOCKS.

Page 5.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Sir, ----- Two years ago last August Basildon Council advised their intention to pipe a ditch forming the far boundary at the end of my garden. Compulsory access to my property was obtainable by statute and furthermore they demanded 20/25' of working space.

Events moved swiftly and for nearly two years some 50' (I thought it prudent to double the estimate) of my garden lay fallow. Returning from holiday early in June of this year, the garden fence had been moved back 50 feet, without as much as "by your leave". This was the depth of land taken to lay a 54" pipe.

Some five months later my own land has still not been returned to me, although, perhaps, it should be explained that the Council have not really taken all that time to put 54" of pipe across the end of my garden. They have also managed to strip off some good topsoil to a depth of 2'/2½' and replace it with a foot thereof, underneath which they have dumped some evil looking clay. The whole mixture becomes thoroughly water logged in wet weather and should make a good paddy field. Prior to these alterations drainage was satisfactory.

The most objectionable act of all was still to come - my home has now been made practically uninhabitable by a powerful diesel pump being placed in the garden next door some 40 feet from my bed. I am being forced to find alternative accommodation, as it is quite genuinely impossible to sleep for the tremendous noise made by this pump, not to mention the pollution of the atmosphere in the house by diesel fumes. Protests to the Council about this disgusting state of affairs, for which they are responsible, brings forth no concern or consideration at all. It has been made quite clear that nothing will be done to improve the situation and they are just not interested in the fact that my home life and sleep is made intolerable and impossible. Their conscience is apparently clear due to the fact that greater inconveniences seem to have been thrust on other people, and therefore why should I complain.

---- G.J.James, "Rosslynn", Upland Road, Billericay.

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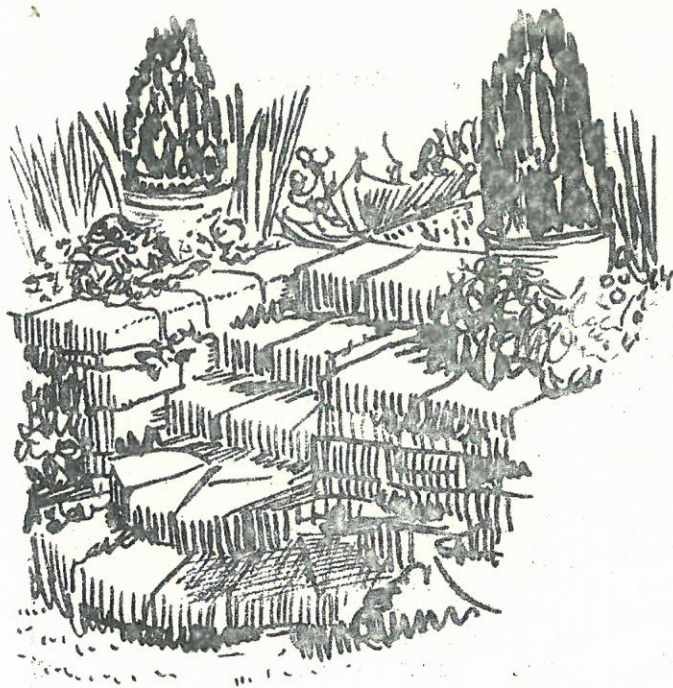
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LAND FOR SOCIAL USES?

At their recent meeting the Development & Planning Committee of Basildon Council were told that the 4th Billericay Scout Group had recently been refused permission for the erection of a hut on a site in Billericay, and had asked if the Council could provide alternative land on which the hut might be erected. The Engineer & Surveyor suggested that provision should be made for land which could be used for this and similar purposes and the Members resolved that the Panels appointed to consider the revised Town Maps in connection with the County Development Plan Review be asked to include in their deliberations the question of the provision of land for social uses.

STOP PRESS NEWS

CUBA - M.P. QUESTIONS P.M.

Mr. Edward Gardner, M.P. for Billericay, asked the Prime Minister after his statement in the House of Commons last Thursday week on the Cuban crisis, about the possibility of disarmament. Mr. Gardner asked the Prime Minister agreed that the crisis emphasised once again that our first ambition should be disarmament by safe and practicable methods by all nations, and if he would assure the House that he would continue to do all he could to fulfill this fundamental condition.

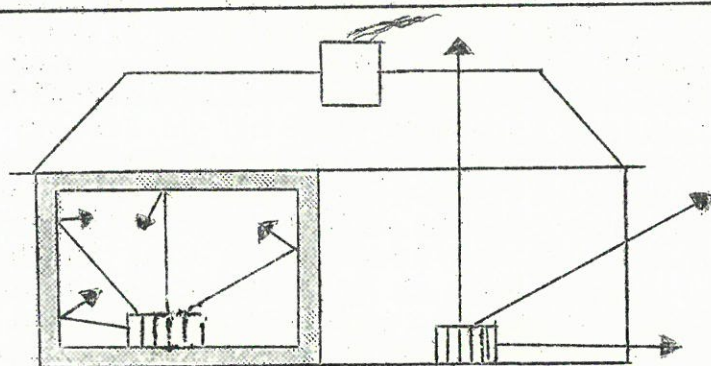
The Prime Minister replied; "Yes Sir. What I feel we must try to do is to resolve this immediate danger without a form of appeasement which will lead us into greater danger, or merely postpone dangers, but, having done that to use it as a new impetus to see whether we cannot proceed with the wider negotiation which alone can give real peace to the world and on which we have made some progress, and on which many of us have worked so long."

Speaking at a Conservative dinner on the following night Mr. Gardner said; "The Cuban crisis has given most of us more than a fright. It has taught us lessons we should have known by heart before; that Communism means deceit that Western unity means peace, and that armaments mean a continual danger of war. Disarmament is no longer just an ideal. It is a necessity which cries for the supreme act of statesmanship once the present crisis is resolved. Unless disarmament by safe and practicable stages by all nations can be achieved we have little choice but to brace our nerves against the possibility of some further disaster."

Mr. Gardner took part in the B.B.C. programme "People and Politics" on October 23rd when he answered questions from overseas visitors on the international situation and railways and roads.

RE-APPOINTED.

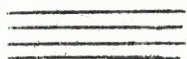
Basildon Council have re-appointed their Consultative Panel on Billericay High Street on the previous basis i.e. three Architects and two C.P.R.E. members. The Panel advises on planning decisions relating to Billericay High Street.



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THIS WEEK'S HISTORY QUERY ----- answered by Wynford Grant.

Q; "Could you tell me when the railway came to Billericay?"

The railway came to Billericay at a rather late date, and this is one of the important factors in the decline of Billericay from an important market centre to a tiny town of little importance.

Passenger services on the Shenfield-Billerica-Wickford section of the Shenfield to Southend line were started on January 1st, 1889, the goods service having been opened in the previous November. It had taken five years to complete the nine miles of line, and the greatest depth of cutting (55 feet) was at Billericay. This cutting had to be excavated by labourers, and the soil carted away in wheelbarrows. Some difficulty was caused here by quicksand. Here also in 1855/6 an urn containing human remains - probably dating back to the Iron Age - was discovered when work was in progress. One or two properties on the site of the railway bridge had to be demolished. Among these was the "Dog & Partridge" inn, the terminus of excursions by horse and cart from Southend.

The opening was performed in some style. At 10.15 a special train with saloon carriages left London, arriving at Billericay at 11.30 (in other words the journey took twice as long as it does today) This train was greeted with "See The Conquering Hero Comes", played by the Maldon Town Band, and the cheers of several hundred people on the railway bridge and around the Station.

At a Dinner on the opening day one of the Great Eastern Directors said that there was ample accommodation for trains on the lines, however much traffic might increase, that Billericay was a model of what a modern station should be, and that it was large enough to meet any increase in traffic. Yet today it is impossible to run any more trains into Liverpool Street during the peak period, and Billericay Station was recently extended and modernised, as it was unable to cope with the amount of traffic.

During the day between three and four hundred people travelled between Shenfield and Wickford. It is interesting to note that today approximately four hundred people come off just one train into Billericay - the 6.12 in the evening peak.

In 1889 there were five trains daily each way between Shenfield and Wickford, and a further train terminating and commencing at Billericay. An additional train ran between Shenfield and Wickford on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

The first Eastern Counties railway timetable, published in 1845, shows that the company recognised the traffic potential in the Billericay area, for a coach met a down evening train at Brentwood (Shenfield Station did not exist) every day. However, when the original plans for the Southend line were issued, the branch was planned to run from Ingatestone to Wickford via Stock. If this had been the case Billericay would never have grown in the phenomenal way it has.

The Editor is prepared to attempt to answer queries on all aspects of local history. Queries should be sent to the "Billericay Observer", 143, Perry Street, Billericay, to arrive by first post Friday.

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

1. F.11494 - Telstar (The Tornados) (1).
2. DB.4913 - Lovesick Blues (Frank Ifield) (-).
3. CL.15270 - Ramblin' Rose (Nat 'King' Cole) (-).
4. HLU.9596 - Let's Dance (Chris Montez) (-).
5. HLX.9699 - Swiss Maid (Del Shannon) (-).
6. AAG.114 - Devil Woman (Marty Robbins) (-).
7. 326544 BF. - Bobby's Girl (Susan Maughan) (-).
8. POP.1060 - Sheila (Tommy Roe) (3).
9. 7N.15446 - Venus In Blue Jeans (Mark Wynter) (-).
10. HL.9581 - Loco-Motion (Little Eva) (5).

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OLDE TYME AND SEQUENCE DANCE

In aid of Earl Haig's Poppy Fund.

SATURDAY 17th NOVEMBER 8 - 10.45

AT THE ARCHER HALL

ADMISSION BY PROGRAMME 4/-, OBTAINABLE AT ASHLEY'S, HIGH STREET, BILLERICAY OR AT THE DOOR.

EVERY THURSDAY

8 - 10.45 p.m.

AT THE ROSE HALL CHAPEL STREET
OLDE TYME AND SEQUENCE DANCING
ADMISSION 1/6

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 11

3 P.M. AT THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

FOLLOWED BY THE LAYING OF WREATHS AT THE WAR MEMORIAL at approximately 3.45 p.m.

MAGICIAN'S FORECAST WAS PRACTICALLY CORRECT.

"Soviet ship checked" was the headline of the "Evening News" last Thursday week, and at a Variety Concert organised by Billericay St. Andrews' Hospital League of Friends, Billericay magician Harry Baron opened the envelope containing the forecast of the headline he had made a fortnight before.

A large audience waited expectantly as he unfolded the piece of paper on which he had made his prediction. Then to loud applause he read; "First ship check".

The prediction was made by Mr. Baron, who is a member of the Inner Magic Circle, before a number of local professional and business people at the Chantry Cafe a fortnight ago. The forecast was placed in a number of envelopes, and sealed by three people, and then placed in the vaults of a local bank. He saw it again for the first time when he opened it before the audience.

The prediction was one of the highlights of a programme, which lasted over two hours, in the Archer Memorial Hall. The Chairman of the League, Mr. S.C. Squires, told the audience that over two hundred and fifty tickets had been sold before the event, and that gross receipts amounted to about £75. On behalf of the League Mr. Squires thanked all the artists who had taken part. They had all given their services absolutely free of charge, he said.

Those taking part were:- Mala School of Dancing by permission of the principal (Margaret J. Upton); Tilly Kimber and Pauline Sevigra (Italian folk songs); the Chelmer Jazzmen; pianist Eric Ricketts accompanied by Elizabeth Ricketts, Reggie Chalmers, and Ron Westlake; the Essex Pipe Band; Wendy Lazell (songs); Harry Baron with Peter Greenwood, Ray Johnson, Sid Nicholls, and Ron MacMillan in a "magic half-hour". The programme was concluded by the Billericay Operatic Society joining with the Mala School of Dancing for a "Merrie England" finale. Members of the Bell School of Dancing, Leyton, were also introduced. The compere was Ron Westlake.

ROUND AND ABOUT by "WANDERER".

During the 1961/2 Winter Basildon Council held a number of highly successful "Public Forums" in the Urban District. One of the most successful was in Billericay. At these Forums people had a chance to put questions to the Council on any topic that was of interest to them. The result was improved public relations between the Council and ratepayers; a better understanding of problems; and action on many matters raised in questions.

We were given to understand, at the time, that these popular Forums would become an annual event. Yet, so far, the Council have not considered arrangements for Public Forums this year. I hope this does not mean that this excellent idea is to be dropped. The Council have left it rather late to make arrangements, but there is still time left. The Council should go ahead, before it is too late.

I also consider that when the Billericay Development Plan is finally formulated, an informal meeting should be organised by the Council, to show the plan to local people, and explain its purpose. I am sure that such an informal meeting would be very popular and useful. Perhaps the draft plan could be displayed in some central place for a week or so, as well.

I am pleased to see that the Council have agreed in principle to erect a notice board for the use of local organisations in the High Street. This will help to foster the community spirit, and will be of great assistance to newcomers to Billericay.

I see that Billericay Residents' Association suggest the erection of a Community Centre in the town, in their bulletin, the "Mayflower". Unlike Laindon and Wickford we already have ten meeting places in the town, not counting the many Schools, which are widely used for community activities. In view of this it would be wrong to put an extra burden on the rates by erecting a Community Centre, a Community Centre which would rapidly become a "white elephant". Rather we should concentrate on improving and extending the amenities at our existing meeting places ----- "Wanderer".