

BILLERICAY OBSERVER

Tuesday December 18th, 1962.

Number 126.



THIS IS THE
LAST ISSUE

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2d

"THE ONLY NEWSPAPER PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN BILLERICAY."

BILLERICAY DANGER SPOT IMPROVEMENT

Action is being taken by Basildon Council to eliminate Billericay's No.1 danger spot - the junction of Western Road and High Street, where projecting buildings reduce vision for pedestrians and drivers, traffic hazards being increased by the narrowness of Western Road. At the recent meeting of the Council's Works Committee it was decided to commence negotiations with the owners of Nos.17 and 19 High Street for the acquisition of these properties in connection with the improvement of the junction. The "Observer" understands that the Council intends to demolish these properties, thus improving the field of vision, and to widen Western Road at this point. Such work would be carried out as part of the general highway improvement for Western Road. Future plans of the Council for this end of the High Street include, I understand, demolition of further properties and construction of a roundabout or traffic island to improve traffic flow, and reduce safety hazards. This work is not likely to be carried out until the link road between this junction and the proposed Inner Relief Road, which will run at the back of the High Street on the eastern (Chapel Street) side is completed.

At the same meeting action was also taken to improve another Billericay danger spot - Laindon Road between Sun Corner and the Primary School, used daily by hundreds of schoolchildren. The Engineer & Surveyor reported that at a recent meeting with County officials it had been indicated that all the land needed for this improvement would be available in the near future, with the exception of some land attached to the Rising Sun Public House. A preliminary scheme had been prepared, providing for a 24-ft. carriageway with two 9-ft. footpaths, at an estimated cost of £12,700. It was decided that the scheme as submitted be approved, and that the Engineer & Surveyor be asked to prepare a detailed scheme for submission to the County Council.

At the same meeting a letter was considered from Billericay Residents' Association regarding the suggestion made at the Public Forum in March, 1962 - that a temporary footpath might be provided in Laindon Road behind the old cottages on the western side, emerging by the side of the Archer Hall, until such time as a permanent improved footpath could be provided. The Engineer & Surveyor stated that this matter had been investigated shortly after the Public Forum. It had been found, that, contrary to expectations, the land involved was not in the ownership of the County Council, and from consultations with the County Surveyor, it was clear that there were many difficulties which would take a considerable time to resolve. Effort had therefore been concentrated on the more permanent and practical solution, as outlined above.

POULTRY FACTORY MUST GO.

Basildon Council have decided that a poultry factory off Noak Hill Road, Billericay, must go. At their recent meeting the Development & Planning Committee were told that an application had been received for renewal of the temporary planning permission which had been granted. The existing permission expired at the end of 1962, and it was decided to refuse planning permission.

OUTWOOD COMMON RD. LIGHTING.

At last Tuesday week's meeting of Basildon Council's Works Committee, the Engineer & Surveyor reported upon a communication from Billericay Residents' Association, stating that Outwood Common Road between Morris Avenue and Jacksons Lane was unlit, and gave rise to concern to local residents.

This length of Outwood Common Road was 900 yards long, was undeveloped with the exception of a few properties at the southern end of the road, and had no electricity main. The cost of providing street lamps with an overhead main would be between £800 and £1,000.

It was decided to defer further consideration to enable the Engineer & Surveyor to report on the use of the road.

FOOTPATH IMPROVEMENT.

At the recent meeting of Basildon Council's Works Committee the Engineer & Surveyor reported that the Billericay Residents' Association had drawn the Council's attention to the irregular surface of the public footpath leading from Laindon Road, Billericay, alongside the Archer Hall to West Ridge. In wet weather pools of water formed on the path, which was without lighting. The footpath served not only West Ridge, but the whole of the Tye Common area, and was used by many residents as a shorter and safer route to the High Street. The estimated cost of surfacing the footpath and of providing these lamps was £430 and £370 respectively. It was decided that provision should be made in the 1963/4 draft estimates for the carrying out of surfacing and lighting of the path.

RAINED OFF - A Sale of Work held by Christ Church, Perry Street, last Saturday week, outside Billericay Church had to be postponed after a few hours because of rain and wind. The sale was in aid of the New Church Fund.

STREETS IN DEPLORABLE CONDITION.

At last Tuesday week's Basildon Council meeting the Engineer & Surveyor reported on the private streets which would remain to be dealt with following completion of the third programme. First and Second Avenues and Little Norsey Road were in a deplorable condition, and had it not been for the absence of main drainage when the third programme was formulated, they would have received consideration for inclusion therein. 3.584 miles of streets were involved in Billericay.

It was decided that First Avenue, Second Avenue, and Little Norsey Road should be included in the third programme of private street works, and that these streets be given priority, in that order. It was also decided that Norsey View Drive, originally in fifth position of priority, should be brought forward to fourth position, after the streets already mentioned.

COUNCIL REFUSE TO ALTER DECISION.

Despite protest from Billericay Residents' Association, and individual residents, Basildon Council have decided not to alter their decision to impose a 40 m.p.h. speed limit along Stock Road, Billericay. The original limit was 30 m.p.h.

BRIDLEWAYS TO BE CLEARED.

Basildon Council have decided to clear bridleways and footpaths in the area over a five-year phased period. A sum of £500 is to be included annually in the estimates for this work, starting with the 1963/4 draft estimates.

About 9 miles of bridleways in the most picturesque parts of the district will be cleared to a width of 12 feet.

PAPER SACKS FOR REFUSE.

In view of the delays likely to be caused to Basildon Council's refuse collection service by the Christmas holidays Basildon Council are to issue paper sacks to affected householders, so that surplus refuse can be hygienically stored. This scheme will cost £350.

The Council are to use all available refuse collection transport, together with hired transport and additional labour to restore the service to normal by the end of the week following Christmas week.

A BILLERICAY GHOST AND A BILLERICAY MYSTERY for Christmas reading.

Whether you believe in ghosts or not this is an appropriate time of the year to tell the story of a Billericay Ghost and Mystery.

The story is set in sombre Burghstead Lodge in the High Street, now the Civil Defence Headquarters. The story goes that an old nurse was to be night attendant to a man lying dangerously ill here. She was to go every evening at eight o'clock to relieve a stranger from London; the doctor was also from London. Her instructions were to be extremely cautious not to speak to the gentleman unless it was urgently necessary, nor to make the slightest motion to disturb the few intervals of rest he enjoyed. The house belonged to a non-resident nobleman from London, and was at various times occupied by members of his family, who obtained all their supplies from London.

A dark staircase of immense width, fenced with baulsters six inches wide, and supported by a massive railing led to the sick chamber. There were two windows sunk a yard deep in the wall, which looked out on to the wilderness in the rear. The young man was laid upon an old fashioned square bedstead at one end of the room. There were a few chairs and a table, and a large fireplace containing smouldering logs. Oak panels covered the wall and ceiling. The whole room was kept dark at the doctor's suggestion, and the solitary candle gave out only a faint gleam. From the Day Nurse the Night Nurse learned that no one but her and the doctor had crossed the threshold, nor had she seen anyone in the remainder of the house, which appeared to be unoccupied.

Nurse wrapped her cloak around her, drew her seat close to the fire, and commenced reading a book which she had brought with her. There was no sound to disturb her apart from the incessant ticking of the "death watch" beetle, and now and then a gust of wind in the withered trees of the garden. The following hours passed away heavily, but about midnight the gentlemen appeared to breathe heavily, and seemed very uneasy. On rising to go to attend to him she was surprised to see a lady sitting on a chair at the head of the bed. She made a curtsy, and moved on towards the bed, when the lady raised her arm, and turning the palm of her hand, which was covered with a white glove, towards her she silently motioned nurse to keep her seat. She assumed that it was some intimate friend or relation who had come in. The lady had a black veil over her bonnet, and her face was turned to the invalid. She saw that the shape and turn of her head and neck were elegant in the extreme. The rest of her person was enveloped in a glittering green silk gown. Nurse determined to observe if she left as quietly as she came, but Nurse closed her eyes for only a minute and the young lady was gone; the invalid was again calm.

The next night was stormy; a crisp sleet hissed on the windows, and the wind moaned in heavy gusts down the spacious chimney, and the occasional bang of a door in some other part of the house resounded with a dire and hollow clang along the dreary passages. She was thinking, when she was struck by the heavy breathing of her charge, and saw the lady in the green gown in the same position. Her dress was the fashionable low bodied summer costume of the period. Nurse was silenced by the waving of the hand, but she approached the bed, and the lady drew away. The invalid was in a state of great agitation, and his glaring eyes followed the young lady. Although she only changed her thoughts for a minute, the young lady disappeared as before, and the invalid became more composed again.

She was reluctantly persuaded by the surgeon to sit in again the following night, and once again the distressing change in her charge ensued, when the mysterious lady appeared. As the young lady moved towards the door, Nurse advanced at the same time, put her hand on the latch, and with the other lifted the veil. A peal of horrible laughter rang through the room, as the Nurse saw that a death's head filled the bonnet with vacant sockets and ghastly teeth. The next morning the young man was found dead, and Nurse senseless, and she too died three months later. One mystery remains - the funeral was attended by a man who looked remarkably like the King of the day.

The great oak chamber was never used again, save as a lumber room, and a strange feeling of awe and coldness is said to fall on those who have attempted to occupy it since the mysterious death. There is one sequel - a few years ago some local boys, who knew nothing of the ghost story, said that they found a mysterious lady sitting in the room. By the time they had fetched somebody, she had disappeared

EDITORIAL.

Editor:- Wynford Grant.

Editorial Offices:-

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

Phone:- Billericay 1927.

Over 300 copies of "Billericay & The Mayflower" and "The Place Names of Billericay", No.3 in the Billericay History Series, have been sold in the first week of publication. Sales of the first booklet in the Series - "Early Billericay" - are now nearing the 1,000 mark, and sales of booklet No.2 - "Mills of Billericay" - are in excess of 800 copies. All three booklets may be obtained from the "Observer" offices or W.H.Smith & Son, 6d each, 3d postage per copy if sent by post.

Very best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

----- The Editor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Sir,-- I much regret your decision to close the "Observer" after the hard work you have put in to this bright local. You have no doubt made some bad friends among the local V.I.P.s, but you can rest assured you have hundreds of admirers, and they I am sure will all wish you a happy future. I trust that freedom from local cares will prove beneficial to you and happiness in the years ahead --- W.J.Pope, Perry Street, Billericay.

Dear Sir,--- How very sorry I am that your paper the "Billericay Observer" is to cease. It has been a great pleasure to my son Arthur, who is in the Merchant Navy. I have posted him every edition to far away lands in America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, West Indies, Germany, Spain and many more. I shall send him your last paper to Sydney in Australia. May I thank you for sending him a little bit of home ----- Mrs.M.Shuttleworth, "Bushside", Queens Park, Billericay.

The Editor would like to express his thanks to all readers who have sent him kind messages.

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FOR THE OLD FOLK

Billericay O.A.P.

On the 5th December Mr.H.Spencer presided. Regarding sick members it was stated that Mrs.Pierce was improving; Mr.Dawkins and Mr.Hill were not quite so well. All sick members were wished a speedy redovery. The Secretary gave out details of the Xmas Party to be held on December 19th, commencing at 12.30 p.m. Entertainment was by the Branch's Concert Party. Taking part were Mesdames Horne and Plumridge with Songs; Messrs.Wiltshire and Plumridge with Songs; a Duet by Mrs.Dawkins and Mr.Wiltshire, and songs by Mr.Joseph who was also Compere. Mrs.Dawkins was Pianist.

On the 12th December Mr.H.Spencer presided over a well-attended meeting. As to sick members it appeared that Mr & Mrs.Dawkins were not well, Mr.McLean and Mrs.Beard were on the sick list. All were wished a very speedy recovery. Birthday honours were accorded Mrs.Green and Mr.Lewis (Treasurer). The Secretary informed members who were interested in the week's holiday that he had received Brochures from several resorts, and he would like members to decide where they wanted to go, because of getting fixed up. Mr.Wood of the National Assistance Board gave a talk on National Assistance and Prescription Charges. The Vice-Chairman, who deputised for the Chairman during the latter part of the meeting, extended a vote of thanks to Mr.Wood.

Buttsbury Monday Club.

On the 1st December the Crackerjacks gave a fine entertainment. Mrs.Waite and Mrs.Cracknell served tea.

On the 15th a very successful Xmas Party was held, with Games, Competitions, and carols sung by the Choral Group, with Mrs.Hawes at the piano. Members were pleased to have Mrs.Bond and Mrs.Leswell with them, who are feeling much better. Mrs.B.Barr also attended. An excellent tea was served by several members.

The next meeting is on the 12th January, when new members will be welcome. A Theatre Outing has been arranged for 5th January, the coach leaving at 1.15 p.m.

Very Best Wishes to all O.A.P. readers for a Very Happy Christmas.

Do you know what Perry Street was called in 1253? How many Billericay people sailed on the Mayflower? What Billerica in America is like?

All the answers to these questions and many more are in the 3rd booklet in the Billericay History Series -

"BILLERICAY AND THE MAYFLOWER" & "THE PLACE NAMES OF BILLERICAY".
by Wynford P.Grant. Price 6d (postage 3d).

Read of Billericay's long tradition as a centre of the Puritan faith; of its connections with the "Mayflower"; of the Billericay martyrs; of Billerica in America; of the origin and development of the name "Billericay" and other local place names.

From W.H.Smith & Son, local newsagents, or "Observer" offices.

Also available - copies of No.4 ("Early Billericay") and No.2 ("Mills of Billericay") both by Wynford Grant and at 6d each.

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REPAIRS TO WATCHES AND CLOCKS.

THE LAST ISSUE ----- by the Editor.

For the reasons outlined in the last issue (work in connection with G.C.E., heavy financial losses, and planning decision of Council) this will be the last issue published of the "Billericay Observer". The first issue appeared nearly five years ago and was taken by four homes; the current issue will go into 1,000 homes. Naturally, after editing and running the paper for nearly five years, this a very sad occasion for me.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who have helped me in the past - the paper's readers; the retailers; the advertisers; the paper suppliers; and all the other friends that the paper has made. I would also like to thank all those people who have written to me expressing good wishes for the future - it has only been possible to print one or two letters.

I am not entirely losing touch with local affairs, since as from January 11th, I shall be contributing a regular column or two of local news to the "Brentwood Gazette". In this respect I would like to appeal to all readers to continue sending in any news they may have for inclusion in this column. Only if this is done will I be able to maintain a comprehensive service of local news through this column.

As mentioned in the last issue, production of the popular Billericay History Series and Billericay Reference Book will continue to take place - indeed, considerable expansion is planned in this direction, with the production of "short histories" of nearby towns and villages. If you would like to receive any further booklets I produce please let me know, and you will receive them as published.

Many people have asked me about my future ambitions. From a scholastic point of view these include "O" level G.C.E., "A" level G.C.E., and possibly University to take my favourite subject of Geography. I would hate to become a national journalist, but I would not object to being a local journalist, and I certainly hope that my future profession will embrace writing of some kind.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Brightside Brook.

Dear Sir, --- It came as no surprise to read the facetious diatribe of the three Amateur Cassandras, who prefer to hide their identity, as they consider themselves "The Greater Inconvenienced". I say in all sincerity perhaps they were, but in my opinion one does not automatically condone and excuse what appears to me to be thoughtless lack of consideration, simply because a Public Body is doing something for the benefit of the community, but which should have been done years ago. It seems rather odd to me to hysterically patronise a Body who in the past has been content to watch more water go over the bridge than underneath, with resultant inconvenience. Furthermore, I believe at least two householders were so concerned for their property during one stage of the trench digging as to urgently communicate with the Council officials late at night.

Regarding the oak trees which were eventually reprieved I would advise these misinformed gentlemen there is only one in my garden. Furthermore, in view of the fact that the C.P.R.E. were interested enough to use their best endeavours, and a number of local people signed a petition to the Council urging the trees be not destroyed it would appear many more people than I were interested in their survival.

As far as my crop of stinging nettles were concerned let me be the first to admit they were of excellent quality. Surely however, it is common knowledge amongst gardeners that such weeds, like constructive criticism, only emanate from extremely fertile soil. At the same time I would extend an invitation for these people to come and satisfy themselves I have considerably more topsoil than the 6" they suggest.

The recommendation of a holiday pending cessation of noise from the pump was duly noted - I would have suggested a similar solution for the "Greater Inconvenienced" as far as their flooding problems were concerned - but that would have been most uncharitable.

----- G.L.James, "Rossllyn", Upland Road, Billericay.

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Tuesday afternoon; Child Welfare
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Tuesday evenings; Bingo, 8 p.m. 2/6d

Wednesday; Whist Drive 7.45 p.m.,
admission 1/6d.

Friday; Keep Fit Class 7.30 to
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REMEMBER as from January 11th, 1962
Wynford Grant (Editor of the
"Billericay Observer") will
contribute a regular column of
Billericay news to the "Brentwood
Gazette" (every Friday, price 3d).

MEALS-ON-WHEELS SERVICE.

Dear Sir, --- This service for the
elderly, house-bound people of
Billericay and district, inaugurate-
ed in March 1961, has grown to
such an extent that W.V.S. wish to
make yet another appeal for help
both in the preparation and the
delivery of the meals to the
recipients.

We would like to stress our
fervent desire to continue the
service with the regularity and
efficiency which is most essential
for the well-being of the old folk.
We can only do this if we have the
voluntary help required to prepare,
cook, and deliver over one hundred
dinners per week.

Men and women can assist in a
number of ways. Men, retired from
business or otherwise, who have a
car and can spare time between
12.00 to 1.30 p.m. to help deliver
the meals, will be accompanied by
a "Mate". Women may volunteer to
act as "Mates" or to help in the
kitchen for a spell between 9.30
a.m. and 12.30 p.m.

Volunteers in both these
categories are urgently needed.
Please come along and see for
yourselves what a satisfying job
this is and what joy and pleasure
the old people get when a steaming
hot, nourishing dinner is placed
before them.

All enquiries to the W.V.S.
Office, 61-65 Chapel Street,
Billericay, or contact any member
who will gladly give information.

As a post-script, I would like
to take this opportunity of
informing the public that, as a
result of the magnificent efforts
of the Meals on Wheels staff in
raising funds, we are in the happy
position to be able to give our
recipients a Christmas dinner and
party at Burghstead Lodge on
December 18th. - Mrs. M.I. Phillips,
Centre Organiser, Basildon U.D.

FLORAL ARRANGEMENT GROUP.

The Group held a very success-
ful Coffee Morning at the W.I. Hall
on November 29th, when over 130
people came to see an exhibition
of Christmas Flower Arrangements.
A donation from the proceeds is
being made to the Oxford Committee
for Famine Relief, and Mrs. Stock-
ton, who came along with some
literature on the work of the
Committee, congratulated members
on a splendid effort.

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OTHER GIFTS TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION

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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS,

To all residents of the Basildon Urban District - the Chairman and Members of the Council send Christmas greetings to all residents of the Urban District and express the hope that the coming year may bring joy, happiness and prosperity to every home in the district.

ANOTHER HIGH STREET PROPERTY TO GO?

At the recent meeting of the Development & Planning Committee of Basildon Council it was revealed that an application had been received for the demolition of 130, High Street, Billericay, and the erection of shops with offices on the site. The Committee felt that the building might be worthy of preservation, and it was agreed to seek the views of the Minister before proceeding further with consideration of the application.

At the same meeting the Clerk reported upon a number of notifications from the Minister concerning deletions, additions, and amendments to the lists of buildings of architectural and historic interest in Billericay High Street. The Committee thought that more information would be necessary before they came to a decision, and the Engineer and Surveyor was instructed to obtain further information and photographs, if possible, for consideration at a future meeting.

COUNCIL DECIDE THE CHURCH MUST NOT BE ERECTED.

At their recent meeting the Development & Planning Committee of Basildon Council decided to refuse a planning application for the erection of a Meeting Hall and Church on the site of "The Haven", Springfield Road, Billericay. The Committee were informed that the proposal had been advertised before being considered by the Committee, and certain comments, some in favour of the proposal, and some against, were considered. After careful consideration it was decided to refuse planning permission on the grounds that the site was of inadequate size to satisfactorily accommodate the development proposed without injury to the amenities of nearby residential properties.

FOR SALE .. Roneo 500 duplicator, recently completely overhauled, in good condition, £20 o.n.o. Apply H.O. Iles & Co., High Street, Billericay.

ROUND AND ABOUT

by
"WANDERER".

This is the last time that this column will appear. During the last five years I have criticised (I hope constructively), I have been criticised in turn (even by a former Council Chairman) and this column has been quoted on radio and television. I have always fought for what I believe, and the only way to do that is to be outspoken, a quality sadly lacking in some journals.

Most of the problems I have dealt with are connected with planning. I have called for better planning, more planning in advance, more publicity for planning. The Council have got to realise that most Billericay people are office workers, and it is no good expecting factories to ease crowding on the railways - only offices will help. I think, and I hope, that the Council are beginning to appreciate this.

Billericay must have a breathing space of three or four years for public services to catch up with development. This is not a "dog in the manger" attitude, it is sheer common sense. Billericay has done three times its fair share in housing, and it just can't take any more people. This isn't something which the Council can defer - they must act NOW.

Billericay could easily become a drab concrete jungle in ten to fifteen years time, like London's older suburbs. Most of the new housing development has been moronic - repetitive development with no landscaping. It may look all right now, but in time it will be like some London suburbs - dull, drab, repetitive, a horror to live in. We must not let this happen to Billericay. Its character must be retained. Unfortunately the only thing with character - our once beautiful High Street - has been ruined, yes, ruined by stupid planning.

The only hope for Billericay lies in the election of men and women who really care about the town to Basildon Council. I feel that these people are most likely to be independent candidates, supported by the local Residents' Associations, people who put the town first, unlike many of their political colleagues.

Very best wishes for the future to you all - be watchful, vigilant or Billericay will be spoilt for good.

---- "Wanderer" (The Editor).