

# BILLERICAY OBSERVER

TUESDAY OCTOBER 25th, 1960

EDITOR WYNFORD GRANT. EDITION NUMBER 72. PRICE 1½d.

## VACANT SITES IN HIGH STREET - COUNCIL'S POLICY

In a letter to Mr. W. Taylor, Secretary of the Billericay Group for the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Mr. A. Hatt, Clerk of Basildon Council, gives the Council's views regarding the many vacant sites in the High St., where properties have been demolished, and there has been no re-building.

The letter reads; "The Council is arranging for the Engineer & Surveyor to survey the existing vacant sites. When this is done he will communicate with the site owners and developers seeking their co-operation regarding the re-development of the site.

The Council are certainly concerned at the unsightly appearance of some hoardings in the High Street. In similar cases in the past it has been possible to effect considerable improvement by co-operation with the developers.

### REST ROOM TO OPEN ON NOVEMBER 3rd.

Billericay Section of the Basildon Urban District Old People's Welfare Committee are opening a Rest Room for Aged People on November 3rd at the Recreation Rooms in the High St. The Rest Room will be open on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for a 3-month trial period. Light refreshments will be available. It is hoped to arrange the re-decoration of the rooms to make them bright and cheerful.

Speaking of the experiment, Mrs. Barr, the Secretary said; "We hope it will provide a place for the old people who do not belong to organisations to make friends. In these days of high fuel costs pensioners will be able to come here all day if they wish, and save fuel".

Any person who would like to help out at the Rest Room should contact Mrs. Barr, 273, Mountnessing Road, or phone 522.



OYEZ, ALL THE LOCAL NEWS!

## HOSPITAL'S FRIENDS "MOST SUCCESSFUL YEAR"

At the Annual General Meeting of the St. Andrew's Hospital League of Friends last Wednesday at the W.I. Hall, the Secretary Mrs. I. Peach described the past year as "the most successful ever". A large number of gifts had been purchased for the Hospital. The fete was very successful, as were the two Jumble Sales and the Cake Sale. Among items planned for the future were a Variety Concert in November, a Cake Sale, and a Dinner-Dance in February.

The Membership Secretary reported that the League had 141 paid-up members, 86 being new members since last year.

The Chairman, Mr. Squires stated that the League had been formed six years ago among a small band of friends of St. Andrews, with the object of providing the small luxuries, which could not come out of national funds. The past year had been a most successful one, for the League had made money, spent money, and had money in the bank.

The Treasurer, Mr. Kennedy stated that he was pleased to be able to say that the League was a financially sound one. The year's income was £1,450, as against £261 in the League's first year, and the balance was over £500.

The following members were elected to the Committee:- Mrs. Peach, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Fincham, Mr. Ashton, Mr. Austin, Mrs. Austin and Mr. Squires.

### BURGHSTEAD LODGE BRIGHTENED UP.

Essex County Council are proceeding with the exterior and internal re-decoration of Burghstead Lodge, High Street, the Civil Defence Headquarters. This Georgian property has often been described as the finest house in Billericay but in the past few years complaints have been made about its gloomy appearance.



## LIGHTING OF CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUNDS AFTER DARK - COUNCIL DEBATE.

Referring to a Parks Committee resolution at the recent Basildon Council Meeting, not to light children's playgrounds after dark Cllr. Rice said; Between 4 & 5 the children come home from school, and if there are several children around the house it is nice to have somewhere to send them. A reasonable light - not floodlighting - after the hours of darkness in children's playgrounds would also deter vandalism after the hours of darkness." Cllr. Rice moved reference back.

Seconding reference back, Cllr. Dove said it would be a safety measure.

Cllr. Mrs. Gadson said; "Our public conveniences are lighted, and it doesn't deter vandalism there".

Cllr. Curtis opposed his own side and said; "Nothing should be done to encourage children out of doors after dark".

Cllr. Condon said that the responsibility of keeping the children indoors was the parents, and not the Council's.

Cllr. Smart suggested that the measure would be an unnecessary one, as most children watched T.V. in the evening.

Reference back was defeated by 15 votes to 9.

## MEALS-ON-WHEELS SERVICE DOUBTS.

Referring to a Meals-on-Wheels service which the W.V.S. is establishing for 100 old people in Billericay, and a grant the Council are making Cllr. Dove said; "I think there are doubts on your (the Conservative) side in case this service grows". Then Cllr. Dove withdrew the statement after being asked to.

Cllr. Phelps stated; "Don't make statements and then withdraw them".

Cllr. W.H. Davies J.P., Chairman said; "You see it is the height of irresponsibility" and went on "If this service expands we shall support it".

Cllr. Phelps said; "This remark of Cllr. Dove's annoyed me as we had a meeting one afternoon here and discussed it fully. His remark is deplorable.

## ROUND AND ABOUT by "WANDERER".

I am pleased to see that the County Council are restoring Burghstead Lodge, to some of its former splendour and beauty. It is to be hoped that they will look after it better in the future than they have in the past, so that it looks like the fine Georgian building it is, and not like a gloomy old mansion.

I am also pleased to note the Council's attitude towards the hoardings and vacant sites in the High Street. There are now eight sites of demolished properties, and another property is in the process of demolition, although I am pleased to see that building operations are proceeding on one site. In my opinion the Council ought to prevent or delay further demolition, until some of the sites have been built on, and the survey completed. What is obviously needed, however, is legislation on a national level.

Whilst I have nothing against three-storey flats or two-storey flats over garages, I hope the Billericay skyline will not be dominated by a replica of the United Nations in Chapel St. The new flats should not be higher than any of the nearby buildings, or the High Street buildings.

I know several people who have spent fruitless hours walking up and down Stock Road and Norsey Road trying to find houses. It is high time these roads were numbered. Perry Street is not so long, yet it was numbered over two years ago.

I notice that Basildon Council are considering using the perimeter of the new football field in Lake Meadows for Car Parking. I am against this, as it would offer the same opportunities for a brew-up and motor repairs as the old Car Park. Provide alternative Car Parking by all means but keep it outside the park!

Last Wednesday was the A.G.M. of the St. Andrew's Hospital League of Friends. These people do a tremendous amount of work for the Hospital and I would like to congratulate them on their hard work and achievements. The same goes for the Old People's Welfare Committee, who do so much for the old people behind the scenes.



## COUNCIL'S CAR PARKING POLICY AT LAKE MEADOWS ATTACKED.

Referring to a Parks Committee resolution to proceed with the provision of alternative Car Parking at Lake Meadows on the Industrial Estate and around the football field, at the recent Council Meeting, Cllr. Dove (Lab.) stated that he was at a loss to understand the Car Parking policy. He asked the Council to have a definite policy on Car Parking. "It is a lot of nonsense to say that the visitors to Lake Meadows do not use cars, and it is due to a lack of foresight that we have not got a Car Park in Lake Meadows". Cllr. Dove moved reference back.

Seconding Cllr. Dove, Cllr. Rice stated "Is it safe to have cars so near the football pitch? We might as well have a Car Park on the other side of the park, as we used to, with an entrance into Perry Street".

Cllr. Mrs. Gadson, Vice-Chairman, said that Cllr. Dove must have had his head in the sand when he attended the Parks Committee meeting. Referring to Cllr. Rice's statement she said that it would be stupid to have a Car Park on the other side of the Park, due to danger caused to children, by cars crossing the park.

Reference back failed by II votes to I3.

## BAD FOOD POLICY CRITICISED.

At the recent Council Meeting Cllr. Smart made a strong objection to the fact that a maker of a bread roll, which contained foreign matter, was sent a warning letter and not prosecuted. He considered the Council's action to be "deplorable".

Cllr. Morgan suggested that the Council was protecting the shopkeepers instead of the general ratepayers.

Cllr. Morley said that if the Council prosecuted without sufficient evidence it was the ratepayer who suffered, because of the high costs which would result from no conviction.

Cllr. Hollands said that it was "fantastic" to say that the Council wouldn't prosecute, because they were afraid of losing money.

Cllr. Phelps stated that it was all a matter of evidence, and the Council relied on the advice of the Health and Legal Departments.

## MINISTER UPHOLDS COUNCIL'S "GREEN WEDGE" POLICY.

The Minister of Housing & Local Government has dismissed the appeal of Floreys Ltd. against the Council's refusal to grant planning permission for the demolition of an existing bungalow, and the erection of a new house, petrol filling station, and service bay at London Road, Billericay, near Mallet's farm.

At the Public Enquiry in August there was strong opposition to the proposal from local residents, and from the Council who stated that the land was part of a "green wedge" between Hutton and Billericay.

The Inspector considered that the Council's policy of preserving the gap between the stream west of the appeal site and Billericay should be supported. He noted that a point at issue between the parties at the appeal was whether the gap should end at the stream or the bungalow, but after viewing the site he considered the Council's choice to be the correct one. He considered that a second reason for not allowing the appeal was the detrimental effect a petrol filling station might have on the free flow and safety of traffic along the main road. Traffic was heavy and fast moving and at present the road provided a reasonably safe stretch for overtaking. There was also a temptation for motorists to cut corners, because they could see through the bends. He agreed however that visibility from the appeal site was excellent in both directions along the road and noted that the road had an accident free record. Because of the planning objections to the proposal he considered that need was a relevant factor. In his view the neighbourhood, particularly the main road, was well provided with filling stations and while some of them were not entirely satisfactory, the motorist was well served.

## RESIDENTS GET ANGRIER, ANGRIER, AND ANGRIER OVER DELAYS AT SCHOOL.

"We are getting angrier, angrier, and angrier" stated Mr. H.E. Wilkins, Secretary of Buttsbury Residents Association on Friday. "The demountable classrooms that were promised for occupation in September are still not in use and it is now half-term". He continued; "The attitude of the Education Committee is appalling, they haven't supervised the job properly and they pretend they are interested when they are not".



THE "BILLERICAY OBSERVER", 143, PERRY STREET, BILLERICAY, ESSEX. Printed & Published by W.P. Grant.

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This past week has been a sad one for British journalism, for it has seen the last issues of three great newspapers, as separate publications. The closure of the three papers concerned was partly due to lack of advertisers, due to comparatively low circulations. By contrast, two extra pages have had to be added to this edition of the "Observer", to keep up with the demand for advertising space. The low prices for advertising in a paper with a circulation approaching 500 copies a fortnight, no doubt appeal to advertisers. However, the most important thing is the RESPONSE. I am pleased to say that out of the items advertised in the Classified Adverts Section, about 75% are sold, and the response to display adverts has been most satisfactory.

The Personal Delivery Service has been re-organised on an efficient basis, and in future a record will be kept of the payments of each subscriber.

----- The Editor.

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THE "OBSERVER" CINEMA GUIDE.  
Ritz Cinema, Chapel St., Billericay.

Monday Oct. 24th (3 Days) Richard Egan, Dorothy McGuire in "A SUMMER PLACE" (A) and "A QUESTION OF LOYALTY" (A).

Thursday Oct. 27th Peter Finch, James Mc Arthur in Walt Disney's "KIDNAPPED" (U) Also Walt Disney's "WHITE WILDERNESS", (U). (3 Days).

Monday Oct. 31st (3 Days) Gary Cooper, Maria Schell in "THE HANGING TREE" (A) and Charles McGraw in "THE MONEY", (U).

Thursday Nov. 3rd (3 Days) Stanley Baker in "HELL IS A CITY", (A) and "SEVEN GUNS TO MESA", (U).

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### O. A. P's.

October 12th.

There was an excellent attendance. Sick members, i.e. Mr. Ramage (who was about the same), Mrs. Candler and Mr. Emery were wished a speedy recovery. Birthday honours were accorded Mrs. Parkin.

October 19th

There was a very good attendance. One minute's silence was observed for Mr. Lankester, who had passed away very suddenly. Also one minute's silence was observed for Mrs. Smith, who had been a very old member, and was 91 years of age. It was regretted that Mrs. Hopkins had been admitted into hospital. Mr. Ramage was about the same, and Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Harrison were improving. All sick members were wished a speedy recovery. The Secretary then extended a vote of thanks to all those who had helped with the forthcoming Bazaar in any way. The Branch's own Concert Party entertained. Those taking part were: Mesdames Plumridge, Sippitt, and Horne with Songs, Messrs Joseph, Wiltshire, Milburn, and Plumridge also with Songs, Mrs. Dawkins, Mr. Dawkins, and Mr. Wiltshire with Banjo and Mandolin Solos, Mr. Milburn, Trombone, and Mrs. Dawkins was the Pianist. An enjoyable afternoon was spent.

### CHRIST CHURCH, PERRY STREET.

Services:- October 30th, 9.30 a.m.,  
Family Matins. November 6th, 9.30 a.m.,  
Family Matins.  
Young Wives Fellowship:- November  
1st, Mr. Amos on the "History of  
Billericay". November 15th, Mrs.  
Bowesman, "Bookshelf".

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## O.A.P's SUCCESSFUL BAZAAR.

Over 250 people attended the highly successful Bazaar of the Billericay Old Age Pensioners Association at the W.I. Hall on Saturday.

The Bazaar was opened by Mrs. C. Law M.B.E., J.P., who said that the Bazaar was a great achievement on the part of the old people, and an object lesson to the younger folks.

The Bazaar was in aid of the Branch's General Funds.

Stallholders were; Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Riches, Mrs. Horne, Mr. Charlesworth, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. Wakeling, Mr. Wiltshire, Mrs. Whitehead, Mrs. Whitworth, Guessing Competition, Mrs. Pearce, Lucky Dip & Father Christmas, Mr. Speller and teas by W.V.S. There was also a W.V.S. Stall

Speller's Cake Competition:- 1/. Mrs. Wallage, 2/. Mrs. Whitworth, 3/. Mrs. Johnson, 4/. Mrs. Speller.

Items for sale were donated by the following shops; Messrs. Kitts, Matthews, Tudor Paint Shop, Clarkes Butchers, Youngmans, Steels Butchers and Queens Park Stores.

## O.A.P's DINNER - REPORT.

124 Members attended the Annual Dinner of Billericay O.A.P's at the W.I. on Monday week, and were served with a hot luncheon.

Mrs. Law, President, said the progress made by the Branch was a wonderful achievement. Starting with a membership of 12, 14 years ago, it now had a total membership of 130.

Mr. Lewis, Treasurer, stated that the Branch was sound financially. Mr. Riches and Mr. Joseph also spoke.

## REFUGE CENTRE IN HIGH STREET --- ROAD SAFETY PROPOSAL.

At the Meeting of Basildon U.D. Road Safety Committee last Friday it was decided to ask the Council to consider providing a traffic refuge island in the High Street near Woolworths and the Council Chamber. It was felt that this would help to keep the traffic in its correct lanes.

It was decided to ask the Council to trim back the hedges and nettles along the footpath to Billericay Primary School in Laindon Road and to repair the footpath.

Rider of the Year Contest:- Winners, Rider of the Year, G. Cook of Pitsea, who also gained the Scooter Section Main Trophy, Runner-up D. King of Basildon. Motor Cycle Trophy; R. Agonbar of Basildon, Runner-up; R. Matthews of Billericay. Ladies Trophy; J. Newton of Pitsea, Best performance under-20; D. King of Basildon.

## LOCAL TOWN PLANNING INQUIRY.

A Town Planning Public Inquiry will be held on November 1st. at Basildon over the application of Mr. A.T. Hammond of Outwood Farm, Billericay against the refusal of Basildon Council to allow residential development at Outwood Farm Road, Billericay.

The Council refused permission, as the land is outside the Development Area, and is intended to form part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The first birthday party of Billericay Red Cross Physically Handicapped Club was held at the Rose Hall on Monday week. A display of member's handicraft was on show. Following the party there was a coach tour to Southend illuminations

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# BILLERICAY IN THE PAST

by W.P.G.  
No.7.

## THE STORY OF NORSEY WOODS.

Norsey Wood occupies the northernmost part of the Parish of Billericay. It is irregular but compact in shape; the length being about three-quarters of a mile east and west, with a width of half a mile, and covering an extent of 195 acres.

Burial Mounds of the Stone and Bronze Ages have been opened at various times in Norsey Woods, and one of Iron Age origin was excavated a few years ago on the Norsey Road edge of the Woods. Iron Age Burial Urns, including a rather fine Bronze Mirror, may be seen in the Colchester Castle Museum, many of them having been found in the Hospital Grounds, and across the high ground towards the Woods in the past century.

In Norsey Woods are also the sites of Kilns which were apparently used continuously during this time, and well into the Roman era, probably by the Trinovantes who had been driven into this corner of Essex by the Belgae who had occupied their old capital on the site of the present Colchester.

Before the use of artillery, Norsey Woods offered special advantages as a defensive position, from the steep slopes and boggy ground which lie along its southern side making it secure in that direction, whilst until recent years there was an open plain along its northern front. This is probably why the Romans chose it as the site for their Fort. It has been suggested that it was the site for the battle between the Romans and Boadicea. The whole position certainly corresponds closely with the description given by Tacitus, but there is no conclusive evidence to support this theory. After the rebellion had been quelled the Romans moved their fort to Blunts Walls at Tye Common.

Until the end of the last century there was a large ditch around the wood. There are also the mysterious pit holes, and the Danepit, a mysterious pit roughly round in shape, from three to six feet deep, and about twenty yards in diameter. Then there are the trenches. These earthworks could be the work of anyone from the Iron Age to the 19th Century. There are many mysteries yet to be solved.

In the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 the rebels went home after the death of Wat Tyler at Smithfield the rebels went back to their homes, on receiving certain promises from Richard II. When these promises were broken, they rose again, and gathered in Billericay. Under Jack Rakestraw or Jack Straw they fortified Norsey Woods by ditches and barricades of carts. The Battle of Billericay was won by the King's Army, led by his uncle Sir Thomas of Woodstock, and Sir Thomas Percy, brother of the Duke of Northumberland, who left 500 rebels killed on the Billericay battlefield, and the defeated rebels left alive fled towards Colchester and Sudbury. Relics of this battle were dug up in the Woods, as late as the last century.

About the year 1858 the gravel bed at the Western end of the wood was worked for road metal, and this continued for some twenty-two years until 1880, when the gravel beds at the Eastern end of the Woods, were opened and sifted for road metal this continuing until about 1895.

During the late 19th. century many discoveries were made in the Woods, although many of the discoveries have since been lost. In 1895 the Wood was the subject of a visit by the Essex Archaeological Society, and a pamphlet on the Woods was written by Mr. B.R. Branfill of Burghstead Lodge.

In the First World War the Woods were used for military training and defence purposes. In the Second World War the Woods were again used for military purposes.

The timber is chiefly oak and hornbeam, with a percentage of chestnut, birch, and larch. The Wood is owned today by Mr. Layland, and the trees are used for the purposes of the Norsey Fencing Co. Thanks to the efforts of the Council for The Preservation of Rural England the Woods can never be built on.

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STOP PRESS.