

# BILLERICAY OBSERVER

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 28th, 1961.

EDITOR WYNFORD GRANT. EDITION NUMBER 81. PRICE 1½d.

## LAKE MEADOWS DANGER - COUNCIL TAKE PRECAUTIONS

Basildon U.D. Council are spending £1,800 on precautionary measures to prevent the bursting or flooding of the Lake Dam in Lake Meadows, which would have serious results.

The Finance Committee has accepted a £100 supplementary estimate from the Parks Committee, to be spent as a preliminary measure on trial borings in the dam. This decision was made after the Engineer & Surveyor had reported that following the very high level of the lake there had been evidence of surface movement on the dam. A more detailed examination had since been made of the dam, together with a survey of water levels, and as a result of which he was convinced that protective works would be necessary to maintain the stability of the dam.

Subject to loan sanction the Works Committee propose to culvert the outfall stream from the Lake to Knightbridge Walk at a cost of £1,700. They made this decision when the Engineer & Surveyor reported that since November, 1960, when the level of the lake was such as to bring about the possibility of serious flooding, because of the inadequacy of a section of the watercourse which had been piped, a survey had been undertaken of the watercourse as a whole, and it was felt advisable to pipe a length of 133 yards.

News Note:- The Lake was built by Major Spitty of "Hurlocks" in the 1880's to relieve local unemployment. It covers an area of about four acres, and reaches a considerable depth in the middle. The dam, up to thirty feet high in places, extends in a crescent along the south and west of the Lake. Several years ago this stretch of bank had to be reinforced with concrete, as it was being scoured away. In November the "Observer" reported that the bank had been sandbagged, and that Council workmen were keeping an all-night vigil with the aid of arc lights.



## JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP REFLECTS C.P.R.E.'S VITALITY

The Junior (under 21) membership of 25 of Billericay Group C.P.R.E. was an indication of the Group's vitality - it certainly was not going to die off in the future, stated Mr. C.H. Latchford C.B.E., retiring Chairman of Billericay Group Council for the Preservation of Rural England, at the A.G.M. held at the W.I. Hall on Saturday. The hall was crowded. Speaking of the Cater Museum Mr. Latchford said; "The most important happening in our year was the opening of the Cater Museum - a historic work by Mrs. Cater. The Museum is a reflection of old Billericay that will become more valuable as time goes on".

In his report, the Secretary, Mr. W. Taylor stated; "The Group received a donation of £100 from a member, who desired to remain anonymous, to be used for the purpose of providing, in co-operation with the local authorities, a bus shelter at Perry Green, or some other public amenity. The Committee referred the matter to the Local Government Sub-Committee for them to submit a definite scheme for the erection of a bus shelter of suitable design".

On the question of the demolition of buildings in the High Street Mr. Taylor said that the Group had approached the Council pointing out how unsightly the gaps and hoarding boards were. In their reply the Council had stated that they were concerned about this problem, and that they would arrange for the existing sites to be surveyed, and would then contact the site owners and developers asking for their co-operation. Mr. Taylor noted that work had started on the demolition of St. Ediths, and he had been in touch with the Council's Planning Officer who assured him that he would insist on tidy hoarding panels.

CONTINUED PAGE 2, COLUMN 1.



On the question of the preservation of trees Mr. Taylor reported on correspondence between the Group and the Council, which indicated that the Engineer & Surveyor shared the Group's concern about the indiscriminate felling of trees. On the subject of development in the High Street Mr. Taylor reported that the Group had two members on the Consultative Panel set up by the Council to advise them on the High Street.

On publications it was stated that a quarterly bulletin was to be issued (the first one was now out) to keep members in touch with the current activities of the Group. The revision of the 1953 "Billericay and its High Street" book was to be published as soon as possible. A booklet of old Billericay characters and sketches was also under consideration.

On footpaths Mr. Taylor reported that the group opposed the stopping up of the footpath from Chapel Street to Valley Road without success, but had obtained partial success, when a footpath from Stock Road to Perry Street was diverted, but on a modified and better line. Some improvement had been made in the Western Road - Gooseberry Green footpath, which had been obstructed by builders. They had also complained to the County Council about the disappearance of the bridge over the River Wid, on the Hannikins Farm to Mountnessing Church footpath, which rendered it unusable. The County Council was considering the provision of a bridge. A survey of footpaths had been made by a member Mr. H. Schofield and as a result a list had been circulated to members, and a map was on view in the Cater Museum. It was hoped that members would use the footpaths.

The Committee had had correspondence with the County Council about the improvement of the site at the High Street/Norsey Road corner, but without obvious results. They were also concerned about the future of the land opposite the railway station approach, and it was hoped that this land (which formed an island bounded by the Industrial Site road and the Station Approach) would be developed in a manner which was a credit to the town. They were also interested in the possibility of a municipal golf course on the Gatwick estate at Bell Hill.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3.

ROUND AND ABOUT  
by  
"WANDERER".

Stretching away from the mosaics of Basildon Town Centre towards the north-west, is a huge road - Upper Mayne - which looks as if it is in the running to become the M2. It crosses the Arterial Road by means of a huge underpass and deep cutting. It looks as if its destination is some large town or trunk road. Far from it! It crosses some country, and will come into a narrow road, which is no more than a series of bumps and potholes, and which has little since a few centuries ago when it was described "as the worst road in England" - the B1007 or Noak Hill Road. By these means it is intended to connect Billericay and Chelmsford with Basildon Town Centre.

Although they have a plan for improving Noak Hill Road, in view of the possible effects on Billericay High Street and the current talk about a "Billericay by-pass" our local Councillors have decided to have a look at the whole question of the by-pass. In my opinion a definite decision should be made one way or the other on the question. Abercrombie's proposed by-pass seems to be the most suitable plan, but it would have to be carefully considered. It looks as if a by-pass will be needed sometime in the future. But I hope (and I feel sure) that the Councillors will consider the financial implications (though no doubt some aid would be forthcoming from higher levels I hope that they will also take into consideration that although the M2 (sorry, Upper Mayne) is a symbol of the progress (?) of the New Town it may prove to be a white elephant, especially for the first few years, and may only carry a small volume of traffic. A survey would soon provide the necessary facts. Nevertheless a by-pass should be given a great deal of consideration.

Rumours are going around about the development (after the planning review) of a certain large parcel of land in Billericay. These rumours, if not completely true, usually have some foundation. We must protect the Green Belt, otherwise London will stretch from Reading to Southend and from St. Albans to Brighton. Development in Billericay will have to be restricted unless a solution is found to the transport problem. And don't expect office workers to work in factories on the Industrial Estate. All this has achieved is to keep Basildon people in work plus a few Billericay timber workers, part-time machinists, and industrial chemists.



## JUNIOR SECTION OF C.P.R.E. FORMED.

In his report, the Treasurer, Mr. Meeson, stated that 40 new members had joined during the year, and that the overall membership was now 291. The balance stood at £211/8/9, £3 more than last year, and the Group was in a good position. They didn't believe in having a large balance, but believed in using the money. 4/1d profit had been made on the three outings held during the year, but these were not intended to make a profit.

Motions altering the rules forming a Junior Section for the 25 Junior Members were unanimously carried. Speaking on the Junior Members Mr. Amos, President said; "Many of us wonder what will happen to the C.P.R.E. in the future, and it is good to know that we have some of the next generation who are interested in the C.P.R.E. and anxious to help us. They want to stand with us, and they want it to be understood that they don't want to be the junior office boys. They want to be trained to step in our shoes. Some of us may be a little bit scared of them, but we should remember that although their ways are different from ours they are as good as us, but they must learn to use tact".

A lecture, illustrated by slides, on Elizabethan Essex was given by Mr. Edwards of the Essex Records Office. Mr. Edwards said that this was a preview to the "Elizabethan Essex" exhibition which would be held at Ingatestone Hall from April to October. This was a very special year for it was the 400th anniversary of the visit of Queen Elizabeth I to Ingatestone Hall on one of her "progresses" through the country. Also the Queen Mother would visit the Exhibition in June, on her way back from the Essex Show.

Mrs. Cater, President for many years, and one of the three founder (1937) members, announced her intention of resigning the Presidency. In recognition of her work she was elected Past President.

Other officials:- Mr. Amos (President), Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Wyatt, Mr. Cottis, Mrs. D. Smith, Mrs. J. Wood, Mr. G.C.A. Taylor, and Mr. C.H. Latchford (Vice-Presidents), Mr. Hammond (Vice-Chairman), Mr. W. Taylor (Secretary), Mr. Meeson (Treasurer), Mr. Richman (Assistant Secretary), in addition to a Committee of ten, plus two juniors, and Sub-Committee convenors. (List in next column).

## BILLERICAY'S MYSTERIOUS BY-PASS.

Asking a question at last Thursday's Council Meeting Cllr. Quirk (Billericay) asked what would happen when traffic from Basildon going up Upper Mayne and Noak Hill Road reached Billericay High Street.

In reply Mrs. Gadson (Works Chairman) said; "Beyond the Noak Hill Road improvement I haven't got the foggiest idea". The mysterious by-pass which is supposed to be proposed for Billericay was mentioned, but nobody seemed to know anything about it. It was decided to have a comprehensive investigation into the question of a Billericay by-pass at the next meeting of the Development & Planning Committee.

News Note:- A Billericay by-pass was first discussed before the War, but it was dropped after some public argument, because the proposed route passed too near the Junior School in Laindon Road. Then in Abercrombie's Greater London Plan of 1945 (which the Government asked him to prepare) a by-pass is proposed round Billericay. It branches off from Noak Hill Road just before Noak Bridge, near where Upper Mayne will join Noak Hill Road. From there it went north-west and crossed Laindon Common Road just south-west of Laindon Common. It continued to go north-west, crossing Tye Common Road, just south-west of its junction with Wiggins Lane. From there it went in a more northerly direction passing just west of Blunt's Wall, and crossing the London Road between the U.D. boundary and Shipmans Copse. It passed west of Gt. Cowbridge Grange, crossed the railway, crossed Mountnessing Road at Hanakins Farm, then went north-east, cutting through Mannings Poultry Farm in Queens Park, running behind Millfield Woods, and behind Norsey View Drive, and then gently bending in to meet the Stock Road at the Kings Head.

## C.P.R.E. COMMITTEE & CONVENORS.

Convenors; Trees & Country-side, Mr. Hammond, Publicity & Information, Mr. Amos, Local Government, Mr. Igledon, Museum & Records, Mrs. Cater, Outings (one-man), Mr. Smith. Committee; Mr. Schofield, Mr. Hurst, Mr. Hewitt, Mr. Watling, Miss Ager, Miss S. Crofts, Miss Perry, Mr. Hay, Mr. Brawn, Mr. Sanders plus two members to be nominated by the Junior Section.

The "Billericay Observer" is Printed & Published by the "Billericay Observer Press" at 143, Perry Street, Billericay, Essex.

STOP PRESS NEWS.



### EDITOR'S NOTES.

Most readers probably guessed who "the well-known Billericay character" in the B.B.C. advert on Page 9 in the last issue was, and watched the "live" television broadcast from Bristol of the "All Your Own" programme, which included an interview with the "Observer" Editor. One result of the broadcast was that a brand new bicycle has been given to the Editor by Helen Coyner of Marlow, Buckinghamshire. In the interview with Brian Johnston the Editor stated that he had to walk 15 miles in the course of delivering the paper. The bicycle will speed up the collection of news (going around Billericay by bus and on foot is a lengthy business) and will cut the time spent on delivery by at least a half.

Another improvement in the time spent on the collection of news will result from the installation of a telephone in the "Observer" office. Up to now I have managed without a phone, but after walking  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile each way to a public box ten times last weekend and waiting several times I decided that it was essential. It will also help people who wish to contact the Editor. The number will be printed in this column, as soon as the phone is installed.

This week has been one of excitement for the "Observer" - in addition to the television appearance and the bicycle, the "Daily Sketch" have interviewed the Editor for a feature story about the "Observer" to be published in that paper shortly. Also with this week the "Observer" completes 3 years of publication - for a special article see another page.

This is another 10-page issue, and owing to the demand for advertising space they will probably be more frequent. Of course, such large issues leave no time for proof reading, but I hope there are not too many mistakes!

The experiment of selling copies outside the Station was "fogged out", last Friday week after a few minutes, but six copies were sold in this short period. The Editor will be there again on Friday the 3rd.

---- The Editor.

THE WOMEN'S CO-OP GUILD MEETS IN THE CO-OP HALL ON WEDNESDAYS, 2.30 to 4 p.m.  
1st MARCH - SOCIAL, 8th MARCH -  
"BULLETIN", 15th MARCH - REPORTS.

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### BILLERICAY FLORAL ARRANGEMENT GROUP.

Next meeting Wednesday March 1st at  
the Womens Institute Hall, Billericay  
at 7.45 p.m.

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Demonstrator Mrs. Totts.

Members arrangement - "Easter Surprise  
Members 2/-, Non-members, 2/6d.

Full details from the Secretary,

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Billericay Floral Arrangement Group

### JUMBLE SALE

To be held at the Womens Institute  
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BILLERICAY O.A.P's.

8th February - Summary.

There was a very long list of sick members, who were all wished a very speedy recovery. Mr. Ramage was about the same, Mrs. Gray was now out of hospital and Mrs. August was welcomed back after being away sick. Mr. Lewis, Treasurer, had Bronchitis. A new member was welcomed. Entertainment was provided by Miss Lawson with her Thornton W.I. Scotch Dancers.

15th February.

There was a very good attendance. There was a long list of members away sick, who were all wished a speedy recovery. Mrs. A. Gray, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Kitsell, Mrs. Bradley and Mrs. Lynam were welcomed back after absence through illness. Entertainment was given by Mrs. Barr, Pianist, Mrs. Johnson with Songs, Mrs. Harley with Character Studies and Mr. Williams with Songs.

22nd February.

Members still absent through illness were Mr. Ramage (who was about the same), Mr. Emery, Mrs. West, Mrs. W. Speller, Mrs. F. Smith, and Mrs. Bertram. Also Mrs. Newell had been admitted into a London Hospital. Mr. Lewis, Mr. & Mrs. Gill, Mr. Dawkins, Mrs. F. Horne were welcomed back after being away sick. Members entertained themselves, quite a few taking part, Mr. Dawkins being Compere and Mrs. Dawkins Pianist. Tea hostesses were Mesdames McCarthy, Cheshire, Wakeling, and Harding.

CHRIST CHURCH, PERRY STREET.

Services:- March 5th, Holy Communion, 9.30 a.m. March 12th, Family Matins, 9.30 a.m.

Young Wives Fellowship:- February 28th, 2.15 p.m., Mr. Curtis on "Shoes". March 14th, 8 to 9 p.m.

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"SPORTS OBSERVER".

Billericay Town Sports Club News:-

Saturday 18th February:-

1st Team lost away to Witham 0-4, CMEP.

Saturday 25th February:-

1st XI lost at home (Town Ground) to Hatfield Peveral 3-5. CMEP.

2nd XI beat Ingatestone Res. at home (New Lodge) 5-2. CME2.

The first team are third from bottom in CMEP, the second team are fifth from bottom in CME2.

The second team's win over Ingatestone ends a run of eighteen matches without a win. In their first six games they got nine points and were top, then they got three points from 17 games (all draws) and dropped to fourth from bottom.

CMEP - Chelmsford & Mid-Essex League, Premier Division.

CME2 - Chelmsford & Mid-Essex League, Second Division.

CINEMA DIARY, RITZ CINEMA, CHAPEL STREET, BILLERICAY.

Monday Feb. 27th, 3 Days, Norman Wisdom in "THERE WAS A CROOKED MAN", (U). Also Bill Williams in "A DOG'S BEST FRIEND", (U).

Thursday March 2nd, 3 Days, Leslie Phillips in "NO KIDDING", (U) and John Crawford in "THE MAN WHO WAS NOBODY", (U).

Monday March 6th, 3 Days, INHERIT THE WIND, A, also "THIS IS ALSACE", (U).

Thursday March 9th, 3 Days, "A TOWN LIKE ALICE", (U) and "GLEN MILLER STORY", (U). The supporting film will show at 4.35 and 8.33 and the main film at 6.31 only, except on Saturday Matinee.

Sunday Programmes Also.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

Forthcoming Events In Billericay.

Tuesday March 7th, Special Council Meeting at Council Chamber, High Street, to announce new Rate.

March 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, Billericay Amateur Operatic Society present "The Merry Widow" at the Archer Memorial Hall at 7.45 p.m., with Matinee on Saturday at 2.30 p.m. Box Office:- Vere's.

March 27th, Buttsbury Residents' Assn., Annual General Meeting, Buttsbury School at 8.30 p.m.

NEWS OF THE LOCAL ORGANISATIONS.

On 18th February the Women's Co-op Guild heard the second instalment of Mrs. Warwick's visit to Poland - where Co-operation is taught in the schools as a subject. As well as educational subjects the Guild there arranges talks on practical matters ranging from sanitation to flower arrangement. On 22nd February Mrs. Morrison led a debate on Mental Health.

Councillor's Visit.

Mrs. C. J. Gadson, Chairman of the Council's Works Committee visited the Gooseberry Green - Station footpath at the request of Buttsbury Residents' Association. There has since been some improvement in the state of the footpath. In a series of letters to the Council the Association have protested about the dangerous state of the footpath, and about ankle-deep flooding caused by water from Radford Way (the Industrial Site Road). The Council have named the road Radford Way and the spur road Radford Crescent in memory of a late Council Vice-Chairman.

MATTHEWS

25/27 HIGH STREET

A GOOD SELECTION OF GIFT  
BOXES FOR MOTHER'S DAY  
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### OFFERS AVAILABLE MARCH 4th - 18th.

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HARVEYS STEAK & KIDNEY PUDDINGS 16 oz.	SAVE 6d, REDUCED FROM 2/8d to 2/2d.	
HARVEYS STEAK & KIDNEY PUDDINGS 8 oz.	SAVE 3d, REDUCED FROM 1/6d to 1/3d.	
BATCHELORS PROCESSED PEAS A.I.	-----	SAVE 1d, REDUCED FROM 6½d to 5½d.
PEEK FREANS SHORTCAKE ½lb	-----	SAVE 2d, REDUCED FROM 11½d to 9½d.
MARRIAGES FLOUR S.R. or PLAIN 3lb	----	SAVE 5d, REDUCED FROM 1/10d to 1/5d.
MARRIAGES FLOUR S.R. or PLAIN 1lb	----	SAVE 1d, REDUCED FROM 8d to 7d.
GLENVILLE CUSTARD POWDER 7 PINT	-----	SAVE 2d, REDUCED FROM 11½d to 9½d.

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### THROUGH THE POST.

Letters to the Editor from "Ob" readers  
(Copy of letter to Mr. Gardner Q.C.M.P.)

Dear Sir,

I feel it my duty as a conscientious citizen and resident of this area to draw your attention to a pedestrian hazard in the centre of the town.

At the Sun Corner, the Sun Street Garage has its pumps so placed that in order for there to be no obstruction to traffic, cars filling up must pull up on to the pedestrian right of way, and this in its turn forces pedestrians out into a busy highway, a main road.

Recently this danger was highlighted when I observed a small child forced into the road in this fashion, who was saved from a nasty accident only by the presence of mind of the lorry driver.

I am sure that you are not unaware of this hazard to life and limb, and I am sure that you should, having due regard to the importance placed on road safety, do something to mitigate this danger.

It has been suggested to me that one of our Councillors has an interest in the Garage, and I feel quite sure that this, if correct, does not weigh with the authorities, but I would feel happier with a disclaimer, and your advice as to whether you agree with me, and if you do what action is proposed to ensure that we do not have to wait until a child is killed, before we do something about this known danger spot.

K.E. REENE, PASSINGHAM AVENUE, BILLERICAY.  
COUNCIL MEETING MORE RESTRAINED.

The atmosphere at last Thursday's Council Meeting was more restrained than recent ones, and passed without the familiar stormy incidents, although at one stage in the proceedings Mrs. C.J. Gadson, Vice-Chairman, called Cllr. Dove, Opposition Leader, a "bighead".

Cllr. Hollands, sole member of the Council's new "Socialist" Group did not meet with much success. Speaking on one amendment he said; "I support the Labour Group". Asked who he represented he said "Socialism", whereupon there was laughter and cheering. Later when he moved a motion on a subject on which the Labour Group supported him last month when he was a member, he couldn't get a seconder. Later Conservatives called him "irresponsible".

### RATES RISE FORECAST.

Speaking at last Thursday's Council Meeting, Cllr. Phelps, Chairman of Finance, stated that the estimates for the next financial year were £83,000 above those for the current year. In addition the County Rate has gone up 11d. When the new Rate is announced next week the "Observer" forecasts an overall rise of 1/1d or 1/2d to about 22/1d, with a 2d rise in the district rate. The rate for the last two years has been the same - 21/-, last year the County rate went up 6d, and the Council rate went down 6d.

### RESIDENTS' SUB-COMMITTEE FORMED IN SOUTH GREEN.

As a result of a meeting last Tuesday week at South Green Memorial Hall, organised by Billericay Residents' Association to discuss Education in South Green, a Sub-Committee of the Association was formed. Consideration is being given to the delegation of responsibility of other matters concerning South Green to the Sub-Committee.

It was agreed that the provision of a bus by the education authorities, for children aged between five and seven from South Green and attending Billericay Primary School was a step in the right direction. However in view of the fact that Bell Hill, which children have to walk up, was a dangerous road, it was decided to ask for a school bus for older children. About 50 people attended the meeting.

### BETTING OFFICE FOR HIGH STREET.

Basildon Council have rented a back room at 108, High Street to a firm of turf accountants for the purposes of a Betting Office under the new Betting Act.

A move to prevent this by Cllr. Pope (Con.), and Cllr. Smart (Lab) failed at Thursday's Council Meeting. They objected to Council property being used for this purpose. No other Councillors supported their reference back - commented one "This Act is here to stay whether we like it or not".

### PRIVATE STREET WORKS.

The following roads in Billericay are to be made up under the Third Private Street Works Programme:- Cromwell Avenue, Lake Avenue, Highfield Road, Passingham Avenue, Norsey View Drive. In answer to a petition signed by 43 residents of First and Second Avenues, Billericay regarding the state of cesspools and the road the Council have stated that they cannot drain or make up the roads until the Tye Common Sewage Scheme is completed.



## TO LET

4-BERTH CARAVAN TO LET AT BRIGHTON, SUSSEX, EVERYTHING FOUND, EXCEPT LINEN. GAS COOKER, OPEN FIRE, CHINA, CUTLERY, VERY COMFORTABLE. ON LOVELY SITE -- SHOPS, SHOWERS, SHAVING POINTS, FLUSH SANITATION, CHILDREN WELCOMED.

TERMS ACCORDING TO MONTH.

FOR ADDRESS APPLY TO THE EDITOR.

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTS

### For Sale

16) Basket on wheels, 15/- . Apply "Moss Bank", Woodside Road, Perry Street Billericay.

## COUNCIL AID FOR SWIMMING POOL LIKELY.

At a recent meeting Basildon Council's Development & Planning Committee considered a request from Billericay Secondary School Swimming Pool Committee towards Phase II of the project to build a Schools Swimming Pool at Billericay.

The first stage of the project was nearly completed and there were funds in hand for further work for the erection of changing rooms and filtration plant. A further sum of £2,500 was required but before giving full consideration the Committee decided to arrange a meeting between representatives of the Swimming Pool Committee and the Council Chairman, Chairman of Finance Committee, and the Chairman of the Development & Planning Committee.

## FISHY NEWS.

Essex River Board have introduced 83 new fish free of charge to the Council into Lake Meadows Lake.

## HIGH STREET CAR PARK - LATEST.

Basildon Council have accepted a tender for the construction of a temporary Car Park at 98, High Street, Billericay. When work starts it will take about 3/4 weeks to complete. However, work is being held up because of the slow progress of negotiations with the County Council, for the purchase of a small piece of land on the High Street frontage.

## ROMAN-BRITISH POTTERY GIVEN TO MUSEUM.

Some pieces of Roman-British pottery, together with the core of a tip of an ox horn of the same date have been given to the Cater Museum by Mr. Tucker of School Road. Mr. Tucker found them in his garden before the war. A few years building operations revealed similar relics in the Secondary School nearby, and many other Roman relics have been found in this area, as well as earlier remains. Mr. Richman, Curator of the Museum, and an authority on local history, is of the opinion that the area was a cemetery.

## FIRST COPY OF "BILLERICA NEWS" RECEIVED.

We have now received our first copy of the "BillERICA News", local paper in BillERICA, Mass., U.S.A., BillERICAY's American sister town. Readers will remember that the "Observer" has re-established links with BillERICA through the "News" (see article in last issue). The "BillERICA News" consists of six large pages. The slogan on the heading reads "An independent newspaper - for all the people". The headlines read "Rumbles of Town Elections Will Soon Be Heard". The publishers are the BillERICA Publishing Co.

## SOUTH GREEN WAR MEMORIAL HALL.

(Bus 251 to South Green).

# BINGO

FORTNIGHTLY

From

TUESDAY 28th FEBRUARY.

2/6d ADMISSION FOR EVENING.

8 p.m. - PRIZES.



## AROUND THE TOWN.

### No.2. - THE RECREATION ROOMS.

Very few people passing along the High Street notice the unobtrusive red brick building of the Recreation Rooms, near Barclays Bank, and almost opposite the Church.

When the Recreation and Reading Rooms were founded in 1860, a cottage on the site of the present building was used. The necessary money was raised by public subscription, the leading subscribers being Dr. Carter and Major Spitty of "Hurlocks". The control was placed in the hands of some Trustees and a Managing Committee. Its main use at first was as a Library and newspaper and magazine reading room, although draughts and chess sets were provided. Then in 1868 the old cottage was demolished and the building we know today was erected in its place.

It was an important and flourishing part of life in Billericay right up to the last War. Then during the war it was hardly used, and after the war it faltered mainly as a billiards saloon.

In 1956 it got into financial difficulties, a public meeting was held, and it was decided to dispose of the stock of books, and keep it going just for billiards.

Then in 1958 it once again got into financial difficulties. Then the Christadelphians hired the hall, got it out of its financial troubles, the Rotary Club inspired an Extraordinary General Meeting, and a new go-ahead Committee was formed. Then the Royal Observer Corps began to use the premises for their meetings, later the Liberals and Residents' Association. Then new lighting was installed, one billiards table was removed, and two large rooms and a billiards room were formed. Then in October last year the Old People's Welfare Committee decided to open it as a Rest Room.

In an interview with the "Observer", Mr. Odell, Secretary, said that the greatest problem was finance. The greatest need was a kitchen, and the W.V.S. would then be interested in using it for their Meals-On-Wheels service. Also new floor covering and re-decoration is needed. With this in view the Committee have applied to the County Council for a grant, supported by the Basildon U.D. Council.

Thanks to the work of the Committee and Rotary Club the Rooms have been given a new lease of life as a meeting place for local organisations. The Committee also hope to re-start the old cultural activities.

### 3 YEARS OF PUBLICATION by W.P.G.

Just three years ago the first issue of the "Billericay Observer" appeared. It consisted of four quarto pages bound together with cotton (two sheets). It contained news items on Private Street Works (the lead story even then), a Blizzard, an article on Holidays, news of floods and a proposed Public House for Perry St., puzzles, opinion polls and features, a short note from the Editor, and of course "Wanderer", who wrote on the Fire Service, old buildings, and the possibilities of a local Museum. The single copy was passed round to a few neighbours.

The 81st issue consists of ten foolscap pages, stapled together, with 500 copies printed on a duplicating machine. Some contrast!

During the intervening space of time the layout has gradually evolved, and the character and opinions of the paper have been moulded.

A stock question is "Why did you start the paper?". I am never certain of the answer, but I think the main reason was that I was (and still am) very interested in newspapers and I wished to run and edit one of my own.

After a few issues, the history articles first appeared in the paper. Then in January, 1959, a duplicator was purchased, and from then on the paper really began to expand. A bout of national publicity followed, and the paper obtained Press Facilities from the Council. Throughout the summer the paper continued to expand. Gradually the national articles were dropped and the paper concentrated on local news. And in August it first went on sale in the newsagents. Then in September the Industrial Estate row started. The tone of the editorials ("Wanderer") changed from calm to hard-hitting. The circulation leaped up. Then the "Ob" started asking questions about Queens Park and more hard-hitting editorials followed. Then the Lake Meadows row started, followed by the Residents decision to put up Council candidates, and even tougher editorials followed. The result was that the Council Chairman attacked the "Observer" at a Public Meeting on Lake Meadows (and the "Observer" replied in the next issue) and threatened to resign from the Council. For a while things calmed down, then the "Observer" started asking questions on Queens Park, but the Council refused to reply. Later they issued a statement. Not all the editorials were so tough though - some complemented the Council. Perhaps next year I will be able to report a 1,000 copies circulation.