

Chislehurst Report

The Newsletter of the Chislehurst Society

No 7

Summer 1997

MERCURY MAST THREATENS VIEWS

Does that headline seem familiar? We printed it in our Spring 1994 issue. Sad to say it is again news. Mercury are back again. Despite having their 1994 planning application refused by Bromley Council they are once more seeking to plant an 80 foot tall radio tower on high ground at Coopers School. The intended site dominates a very wide sweep of the National Trust Estate and the adjoining Green Belt areas beyond. It is in the same grounds as a statutorily listed building and within the Conservation Area, where any development is expected to "preserve or enhance" the appearance and character of the area. It is clear that Bromley Council would never give approval to such an extreme despoliation of treasured views and the character of a much loved area. But this time Mercury have gone over the heads of Bromley Council and asked the Secretary of State for the Environment to decide on their application. So be it, but let us ensure that the Secretary of State knows what the local public think about it. This matter should not be decided behind closed doors. We believe we are entitled to a public hearing at which the strength of local feeling can be expressed and we invite members who support that view to write to the Department of the Environment: Room 10.08, Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ - quoting reference APP/G5180/A/97/276603. Drawings of the proposed tower can be inspected at Bromley Civic Centre (reference 97.1631). The school already has high-level aerials eg. on top of the chimney which faces onto the Commons. (Recently, yet another very similar application has been made to Bromley Council by Mercury and two other companies).

SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE OF HIGH STREET SHOPPING AREA

As reported in previous issues, Pizza Express has been seeking planning permission to open a restaurant at 41-43 High Street (Wrattens). This would have meant a further loss of retail capacity in the High Street, contrary to Bromley's Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and the application was accordingly resisted by the Society and by Bromley Council. When the matter went for decision to the Secretary of State for the Environment, his Inspector took the same view as the Council. In dismissing the appeal he made the following remarks: "In my opinion, particularly given the existing relatively high level of service provision in the centre, the proposal would seriously affect the balance between retail and service uses, and thereby weaken the attractiveness of the parade and of the centre to shoppers". It "would harm the vitality and

THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS APPEAL 1997 GRAND SUMMER DRAW

Not many people realise that Chislehurst Chamber of Commerce organises and pays for the Christmas Lights in the High Street each year. Many people were disappointed that the Chamber was unable to finance the lights last Christmas, but moves are now well under way to ensure that the lights will go up again this Christmas. The cost is high - over £2,500 for lights on just 14 lamp-posts in the High Street. Angela Hanson is promoting and organising the Chislehurst High Street Christmas Lights Appeal 1997 which was launched at the Chamber of Commerce Summer Fair on 7 June with the GRAND SUMMER DRAW. Tickets are being sold for 50p each and the main prizes will be: 1st prize £300, 2nd prize £200 and 3rd prize £100. There are other prizes which have been donated by local businesses. Angela needs to sell at least 5,000 tickets, but there is only a limited amount of time in which to do this as the draw takes place at the Crown Inn, School Road on **Thursday 21 August**. This year's May Queen, Rebecca Wiffen, will be making the draw. Tickets are available individually or in books of 10 from some shops in the High Street and from Scribes Lodge. If you would like to buy tickets for the draw please contact Angela at Scribes Lodge, 39b High Street, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5AE or call her on 0181 295 0755. Tickets will also be on sale in Sainsbury's on 15, 16, 17 and 18 August.

viability of the centre". He notes that "vacancy rates in Chislehurst were agreed to be only half the national average, and this supports the Council's assertion that the centre does not suffer from lack of demand". It should be noted that had Pizza Express chosen to get a place in the High Street by taking over an existing catering site, instead of seeking to replace a retail outlet, contrary to the UDP, the company would have faced no planning obstacle. The premises formerly occupied by the wine-bar Barcave are currently unoccupied and boarded up.

PLANNING NEWS

In recent years Society publications have reflected the anxieties of many members about the future of the former **civil defence building** in Kemnal Road (the "bunker" or

"blockhouse"). An imaginative planning application has now been submitted to turn the building into a 5-bedroom dwelling, and is being considered by Bromley Council. Willams, the Chemist, **High Street**, has appealed to the Department of the Environment against the refusal of Bromley Council to authorise the shop's present shopfront shutter. Foxes Restaurant, **High Street**, was required by Bromley Council to remove the slate tiling that had been added to the shopfront and this requirement has now been endorsed by the Department of the Environment. Bromley Council has refused permission for an illuminated box-sign at first floor level at **72a High Street**, for an illuminated fascia board and box-signs at **14 Belmont Parade**, for a flower stall on the forecourt of the **Queen's Head** (Saturdays and Sundays), and for two 4-bedroomed houses in **Southfield Road** (an appeal has since been lodged). Sainsbury have been given permission to install outside teller machines (after the Society had opposed an earlier, unsuccessful proposal that would have blocked free access to the arcade along the frontage).

TRAFFIC CALMING

The Society has continued to have discussions with officers of Bromley Council. It is expected that LBB proposals will be available for public consultation later this year.

A VIDEO OF CHISLEHURST?

The Society is having preliminary discussions with Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication on the possibility of college students producing a video of Chislehurst as part of their second year work. As a result of a generous bequest from the late Charles Dunn the Society would be able to make a significant financial contribution to the project. It is felt that this would be a most appropriate and exciting use for the bequest.

NEW DAY CENTRE: IN MOTTINGHAM

This is a new "Age Concern" venture. A new Day Centre for elderly people opened in June 1997 at St Edward's Church, St Keverne Road, Mottingham. It is called St Edward's Day Centre; it will be funded by the London Borough of Bromley, and managed by Age Concern, Bromley, in partnership with St Edward's Church and the local community. Volunteers are required for several tasks, including helping to prepare and serve meals, providing company and arranging activities, helping with personal care tasks, fund raising activities, driving and escorting on ambulances, and greeting people on arrival. If anyone would like to help in any way, please contact Jenny Lindsay or Barrie McKay, Age Concern, Bromley; the telephone number is 0181 663 3771.

MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS

The Churches in Chislehurst are already beginning to plan together for celebrations for the first six months of the year

2000, culminating in a Fun Day in the Recreation Park on Saturday 10 June, and a picnic and "Songs of Praise" type service the following day. All sections of the community will be welcome to join in and readers of the Chislehurst Report with suggestions are invited to get in touch with David Temple on 0181 467 0388 before November when details will be finalised.

LOCAL RADIO OPPORTUNITY

Would you like to have a Local Radio Station covering Chislehurst? The Radio Authority is currently advertising a licence to cover South East London; but although Bromley Borough is part of the area they are looking at (along with Lewisham and part of Southwark), the licence cannot cover all of it. If local organisations and the public do not show a strong interest in having a Bromley station or put forward a strong case for it, the licence may be awarded elsewhere. The Radio Authority has said that it wants to hear views about the local radio needs of listeners in the area, and the type of service they would like to see. This is your chance to make your voice heard! Comments or views should be sent to: The Head of Development, The Radio Authority, Holbrook House, 14 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5DG.

THE NATIONAL TRUST

Information about the Trust's exciting plans for the Hawkwood Estate are reported in the current (No. 69) issue of The Cockpit, together with details of the Trust's series of local lectures for the rest of the year.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The winners of the Alun and Joy Jones Environmental Studies Awards, and the Memorial Trophy for 1997, are listed in full at page 8 of the current (No. 69) issue of The Cockpit.

A.G.M.

By courtesy of the school, the 1997 Annual General Meeting was held in the delightful hall of Farringtons and Stratford House School. It was well attended and there was lively discussion of a wide range of current topics. Mr Mike Ibbott of Bromley Council gave a short address on the progress of Local Agenda 21 (the local contribution to the widespread effort to help shape a more sustainable world for the next century).

SOCIAL EVENING

Members may wish to note in their diaries that the next Society Social Evening will be held on Thursday 13 November 1997. The main attraction of the evening will be a talk on the work of the National Trust and will be followed by supper. Final arrangements for the evening will be announced in the next edition of Chislehurst Report.

Chislehurst Report is a publication of the Chislehurst Society (Registered Charity No. 298413)

The Society has over 5000 Members and actively seeks more. Please address enquiries about the Society to:
The Chislehurst Society, PO Box 82, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5TT