

# THE CROXLEY RESIDENT

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

No. 75

Editor—Mrs. D. HORWOOD, 47 Owens Way.

No. 2—April 1962

## THE NEXT STEP

I was pleasantly surprised to find my first letter as your Chairman quoted and commented upon in the Local Press, together with a different opinion expressed on the points at issue. I welcome such criticism, which I think was sincerely offered, as it stops one falling into the rut of thinking always along certain lines, which is the easiest way to lose touch with reality. It has been most encouraging to see the electors attending our open meetings and I hope they will continue to do so, as the opportunity to obtain first-hand information from our Councillor—as well as other Council members—may overcome that apathy to local affairs which is so widespread today as to be almost dangerous.

So much for what the Association is trying to do to keep you informed of events. Now a few words about what the Association plans for the forthcoming Local Council Elections in May 1962.

In the first place it is our duty to those of you who have kindly subscribed to our "Fighting Fund" to use this money to the best advantage to secure "RESIDENTS'" Councillors in the Council Chamber. I consider we should put forward one Candidate in the South Ward again. It would not, in my opinion, be a good course to contest the two vacant seats in the North Ward as we wish to proceed steadily and not over-reach ourselves. Since the election of Mr. Armson last year, he tells me that more people from the North Ward have approached him with their problems than those who live in the South Ward, which he represents. It seems, therefore, a sound policy to nominate a Candidate for the South Ward who lives in the North Ward and who will, if elected, be conversant with that part of Croxley. With the foregoing in mind it is right that you should know that the Committee have considered several possible Candidates and are now fully confident they have found a person satisfying these conditions and willing to stand.

If the Association can secure the election of a second member of the Council it will be a great benefit to all Croxley residents, enabling us to bring into the Council debates, Croxley matters, which, all too frequently, have

been by-passed through lack of support in the Council Chamber of our present Councillor. Mr. Armson has been handicapped continually in this respect for lack of a seconder, although he has been helped by another Councillor on some occasions. With two Councillors any matter of interest to Croxley Green can be brought into the open for further consideration on that score alone and without reference to Party Politics. From this please do not infer that the other members of the Council do not study the interests of Croxley Green: they do—BUT, as W. S. Gilbert wrote as long ago as 1882 in "Iolanthe", when they vote on any proposal they "vote just as their leaders tell 'em to". I talk to many people in Croxley on the theme that Local Government would be much better if National Party Politics were left out of it and so far everybody has agreed with me. That, I submit, is what the majority of us would prefer and in May the electors of the South Ward will have another opportunity to steer away from national political views by voting for the Candidate nominated by the Association which, as you know, is non-party political.

In due course all voters in the South Ward will receive an address from the Candidate of our choice and in the 12 or 13 hours that the Poll will be open I urge you to go along and record your vote for him. Don't leave the job to the man next door—or the lady across the road. After last year, every single vote will be needed if Croxley Green is to get the Councillors we feel it needs and it depends on you . . . we, the Association, cannot do that job for you!

In this issue of the "Resident" there appears the first instalment of an article specially written for us in an attempt to follow a suggestion made some time ago that the "Resident" would be improved by a few articles of local interest, but away from Council affairs. Please let our Editor know (her address is at the top of this page) if you would like similar "magazine" articles in future issues.

B. W. GARDNER,  
Chairman.

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**Trees**

Thanks are due to the Council for the way in which trees have recently been replaced in Barton Way, and also for the attention given by specialists to the trees in Baldwins Lane.

**Memorial Seat on The Green**

Although the Association still maintains that the Council has a moral responsibility to replace the damaged seat near the War Memorial, our Councillors still decide not to do so. As it is known that the original plaque is to be found somewhere in Basing House, just why the Council are not co-operative is beyond the understanding of residents whose contributions led to the placing of this seat as a memorial to many who gave their lives in the last war. "They did not count the cost."

**Junior Accident Prevention**

A census taken of pedestrians and traffic using Baldwins Lane at the junction with Manor Way and Repton Way did not produce high figures to justify the provision of a Pedestrian Crossing, according to the Ministry of Transport. The Ministry saw no reason why pedestrians should not cross this road safely! However, the Council agreed to ask the Local Education Committee to provide a school crossing patrol at this junction. When?

**Croxley Signs**

The Committee supported a suggestion that there should be "Croxley Green" signs sited at Cassio Bridge and the foot of Scots Hill. The Council would not accept the idea, but have made provision for the Surveyor to have four district signs erected on the boundaries at either end of the roads A.404 and A.412.

**Take-over: for Sycamore Road**

The Council will enter into an agreement under the Highways Act, 1959, section 40, with Kebbel Development Co. Ltd., with a view to the ultimate adoption of the extension part of Sycamore Road. Residents in the original section of the road would be very pleased to see some action to their benefit.

**Trouble Down Under**

The underground sewer in Watford Road is a small 9" sewer taking the flow from the greater part of Croxley Green and in places is 27ft. in depth. No wonder it cost the Council £1,150 to have the sewer descaled after finding a serious blockage during the Christmas holidays.

**Baldwins Lane**

It is pleasurable to travel along this road since the new lamp standards have been in operation. A worthwhile effort by the Council.

**Black-spot**

Why does it take six weeks or more to have a damaged lamp standard replaced? We refer to the one demolished in an accident outside the "Two Bridges". P.H.

**The Things They Say**

Councillor Payne speaking of local Residents' Associations at a local function recently is reported to have said "They are the watch-dogs of the urban areas and *believe me we know it*. Invariably what they want, the Council want, so between the two we *sometimes* get things done." The words are his, the italics are ours.

**Help the pedestrian** is our cry in seeking to have the pedestrian crossing re-sited a little further west of Croxley Green station. With the complete renewal of Cassio Bridges in the near future we hope this will be effected in the general improvements.

**1963 Re-Valuation**

Since this matter was raised at the A.G.M. a deputation consisting of the Chairman, Secretary, Cllr. Armson and Mr. Leach, discussed future developments with Mr. Gilbert Longden, M.P. At his suggestion, answers to technical questions are being obtained from the Valuation Officer, and will be published when known. Concerning Income Tax, the Inland Revenue say that no change is expected in the present basis of assessment for income tax.

**Caravans**

Rickmansworth Council soon made it clear that they will not tolerate infringements of Town Planning laws, and consequently notice has been given to stop the display of caravans on a site in Watford Road.

**Ring-a-ding-ding**

It was re-assuring to see the telephone kiosk in Baldwins Lane appear outside the shops some two weeks after it disappeared from near the Doctor's surgery.

**Travel to Town**

June is not far ahead and in that month changes will take place in our L.T. Railway service consequent upon completion of the improvements north of Harrow.

The travellers who have enjoyed comfortable journeys to and from Marylebone will no longer find connections at Moor Park. On the other hand the majority who pass through Baker Street should reap the reward of the improvements, after a lengthy period of delays due to the engineering works which have been carried out. Let us hope that from June onwards it will again be possible to take a train to London and arrive there at the time stated in the time-table.

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## IN REMINISCENT MOOD—"THE MET"

In these busy days we often take things for granted and have little time to stop and think how they came about. Most of us so regard the branch railway, still colloquially referred to by Croxleyites as "the Met", which serves so many of us who travel daily to and from London.

As a large part of the population of Croxley has either moved into the village or grown up there since this line opened for public service nearly 37 years ago on the 2nd November, 1925, it may prove both interesting and entertaining to put the clock back and recall what happened.

The idea of bringing the Met to Watford originated as long ago as 1912, but plans were shelved, until in an effort to cure unemployment after the first World War the Government of the day passed an Act which enabled them to guarantee financially suitable projects. It was late in 1923 that the contract to build this line was let to the Doncaster firm of contractors, Messrs. Logan & Hemingway.

Let us first take a look at both ends of the line. Take a walk with me down the Mill Hill to the canal and continue towards Rickmansworth along the tow-path. Where the canal is wide enough to turn a barge round, stood a stone crusher working on material got from the gravel pits behind Frankland Road and Close. This area was then connected to the main railway line by an extensive network of sidings. The bridge carrying the two railway tracks over the canal was a lattice girder structure and a favoured spot for the forerunners of our present day "loco spotters" as in 1923 both Metropolitan and Great Central trains were steam hauled and all the locomotives' moving parts could be seen through the bridge sides from an unusual view point on the tow-path.

Our other imaginary walk is behind the Watford Boys' Grammar School on to their playing fields (not so large or level as now) and looking towards the River Gade you would have seen a gently-sloping meadow running down to the river. On the present site of Watford Met goods station was a dell into which had been tipped all manner of scrap after the War and many a prize rewarded the more adventurous pupils who went exploring there in their lunch break. Mills bomb cases and carbon rods out of dry cells were firm favourites and much sought after. Looking towards Cassiobury Park an incongruous looking aircraft hangar—a relic of World War I—marked the end of housing development in Cassiobury Park Avenue.

Now these two points are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles apart and the country in between was not the easiest through which to build a railway. Strangely enough only one row of cottages had to be demolished to build the line. That stood on the site of Croxley Station and was similar in appearance to that which stood on "the patch" opposite the Red House and was demolished after bombing in World War II. The occupants of this row of cottages were re-housed in the houses by the entrance to Croxley goods yard in the Watford Road, which were specially built for the purpose. Whilst on housing it is interesting to note that some of the first ever pre-fabricated concrete houses were erected at Gadebank by the side of the canal off Rousebarn Lane to house some of the construction staff working for the contractors.

The first thing the contractors did was to build a railway line from one end of the job to the other, starting from the sidings by the canal close to the site of the power house in Croxley Hall woods. This line, laid in early American style with flat-bottomed rails spiked to the sleepers was more like a big dipper at the seaside than anything else. Let us follow its ups and downs with reference to present day landmarks. It rose on the edge of the present cutting, skirting the dell in

Croxley Woods and up to the level of Harvey Road. A level stretch followed along the back of Frankland Road to a level crossing over the Watford Road where numbers 178 and 180 now stand. On one occasion at least these level crossing gates were carried away by a motor car—so road safety is not exactly a new idea. The line then followed closely the present hedge, dropping to a point behind the Scouts' Hall, where it crossed to the other side of the completed line and rose again to the level of Winton Approach bridge. Then followed a sharp drop to cross Baldwins Lane by another level crossing, to level ground before a short rise to gain height to cross the canal and tow-path by a single span box girder bridge supported on crossed timber supports. This bridge looked very much like the present bridge carrying the Watford High Street — Rickmansworth branch over the canal below the Common Moor. After crossing the canal the line continued on level ground beside the fishing lake and over the Gade by the timber bridge which now forms the back entrance to the timber yard. Crossing Gade Avenue (then called Rousebarn Lane and not made up) the line climbed to an engine shed and maintenance depot and continued uphill to end on the site and level of Watford Station.

The main items of plant now began to appear, including a fleet of four 0-6-0 inside cylinder saddle tank locomotives, very much like Great Northern engines of days gone by. They had no cabs but only a pair of look-out glasses set in an upright weather-board. Believe it or not they were kept spotlessly clean and shiny. Three steam cranes of various sizes for lifting materials were produced along with a fleet of wooden trucks for earth transport. Some of these were side tippers and the others tipped endways. These trucks had no springs or buffers apart from the ends of the wooden frames on which they were built and were loose coupled together by chains slung between the frames, which had a simple hook and ring coupling. We are talking about the days before drag-lines, bulldozers and scrapers were invented and to cope with the extensive earthworks involved three steam operated navvies were supplied. They were to move  $\frac{1}{2}$  million cubic yards of soil before their task was done. A short description of these machines may help those who did not see them at work to appreciate how such cuttings as those between Croxley station and Harvey Road bridge were made.

These navvies, which moved under their own power, ran on rails about 12 feet apart laid on long sleepers and when digging a large screw jack at each corner was let down to give added power and stability. A vertical at each corner was let down to give added power and stability. A vertical boiler and the driving machinery were housed in a shed-like corrugated iron housing with an absurdly small chimney puckishly sticking out of the top. The business end was a jib, shaped like an ordinary kitchen shelf bracket, which could turn through a half-circle. Mounted on a boom passing through the top member of this jib was a steel bucket of about 2 cwt. capacity, fitted with a releaseable bottom. This bucket was scraped up the face of the ground until full and then swung round and the soil dropped into a tipper truck on an adjacent track. When a train of half a dozen trucks had been filled one of the engines hauled them away on to the contractors line I have described and transported to the spot where tipping was going on to build an embankment. The high embankments seemed to grow very slowly by this process despite the continuous stream of wagons going to and fro. The deeper cuttings needed two trips by the navvies as it was not safe for them to dig more than about 15 feet below the surface.

(To be continued)



### Traffic in Watford Road

During the open meeting in January, attention was focussed on traffic conditions along Watford Road, with particular note of the fact that three school-crossings are located very near to each other. The Press are commended for the way in which they gave publicity to the problem. During the following weeks more Police patrols were noticed; especially the inconspicuous policeman standing outside the Post Office who made a big impact on the speed of traffic. The Hon. Secretary had requested the Chief Constable to see that more policeing took place along Watford Road. The official reply expressed concern, promised all help possible depending on staffing difficulties.

#### A Resident writes—

"Whilst there appears to be no immediate prospect of improvement at the Harvey Road and Bateman Road crossings I would suggest that a considerable improvement could be achieved at the Grammar School if the following scheme was adopted.

The south-bound bus-stop at All Saints' Church should be moved to a point immediately south of the entrance to the approach road to the School and in a lay-by, for which adequate space now exists. Recent observation indicates that approximately 66,500 child-crossings would be eliminated in the course of a year.

From the Watford direction about 175 children arrive by bus each morning, which with those from the Rickmansworth direction, whose crossing of the A.412 whilst homeward-bound would be eliminated, makes a total of 350 crossings daily. Assuming the year to be 190 days the considerable figure of child-crossings quoted above could be saved.

In addition should be considered the fact that the same scholars would be saved the need to cross The Green when making their respective journeys to and from school. Admittedly the last named road carries a far smaller volume of traffic but between 8.15 and 8.45 a.m. a considerable flow is maintained in a southerly direction.

Here then is a feasible proposition, to lessen the risk to pupil and patrolman and involving no heavy expenditure.

Yours, etc.,

L. V. REASON."

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### CROXLEY CAMERA CLUB

Photography is such a popular hobby today that there is hardly a family in the district that does not own a camera. To cater for the local photographers a small group of enthusiasts got together last year and started the CROXLEY CAMERA CLUB.

The club is composed of a number of beginners with a sprinkling of more advanced workers to guide them along their way. Meetings are held at the Dickinson Guildhouse on alternate Wednesdays at 8 p.m. The programme for the coming season is made up of Practical Demonstrations, Competitions and Lectures with Slides by local experts.

The Club will welcome new Members and cordially invites anyone interested in photography to attend any of the meetings, even if it is only to see some of the Colour Slides or ask advice. We feel sure that once you have been you will wish to come again. Next meeting April 4th.

Sec.: F. N. GOODE, 11, Dickinson Avenue.

#### Motorists' Corner

May we remind you that parked vehicles must carry lights at night, because the law for the Metropolitan Police does not apply in Hertfordshire. Legally it is just as wrong to park a car on the footpath (without lights) as it is to park it on the road.

#### Personal

A traveller on the Met Line wants to meet again the lady who once saved his hat from bowling under the 8.35 train. She used to travel to Piccadilly, has auburn hair, about 5ft. 3in. (All replies to the Editor!)

### A LOCAL FOOTPATH QUESTION

The entrance to the footpath through Long Newlands Spring (northwards from Little Green Lane and almost opposite Little Green School) has recently been obstructed with barbed wire and investigation has shown that the path does not appear on the Draft Map prepared by the County Council under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. The Ramblers' Association is to appeal for its inclusion on the map and the Association's local representative Mr. L. V. Reason of 40 Repton Way would be pleased to hear from persons able to give evidence of obstructed use of this path in the twenty years prior to 1953.

Ladies' Keep Fit class is held in The Guildhouse at 2.15 p.m. on Thursdays.

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