

Flat J, 4 Oxford and Cambridge Mansions, Old Marylebone Road, N.W.1

TELEPHONE: 262-6320

18 May 1971

Dear Mrs.Greenwall,

Hope you had a happy and relaxed holiday in Spain... Jonathan mentioned you would be back in Sandgate this week, and Mrs.Kerr mentioned that the County Council were sending someone down to talk to you about Conservation. I hope they bring the album/survey with them, and the maps to what will obviously be a vital discussion.

To put you in the picture, some press cuttings are also enclosed in case they havnt been drawn to your attention.

Mr.Vorley has photostats of the pre-amble to the album. I am sending you another set, and hope ~~you~~ they are not too illegible.

If the Folkestone Council think that Grimston Avenue and the Metropole are worthy of Conservation (typical Victorian and Edwardian grandiosities) I think equal consideration should be extended all over Sandgate.

IS THERE ANY TREE PRESERVATION ORDER on the hillsides of Sandgate? Do the plans to demolish Radnor Cliffe House and redevelop mean that the gardens sloping to the sea will be denuded of trees and ~~g~~ vegetation? This bluff or shoulder of green sloping from the Leas to the shore, is an intrinsic part of the coastal scene and should be protected down to the shoreline dont you think.

I know how very much you have always had Sandgate at heart, and hope you will have a fruitful meeting.

Sincerely yours

Linda

Linda René-Martin

IN THE EDITOR'S POSTBAG

Conservation area plea

IT is welcome news (Gazette, May 5) from Alderman Wilfred Lawrence, chairman of Folkestone Town Council planning committee that the council aims to preserve the character of Sandgate.

It is good to know that the survey and submissions presented by the Sandgate Society have not been ignored, and that the council is showing a more enlightened approach.

Originally, the proposed conservation area submitted by Folkestone Council to the county planning authority virtually ended where Sandgate began, save for a small area round the Castle and the police training college.

Assurances, however, are not enough without the formal designation of Sandgate as a conservation area, provision for which is made under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967.

This will ensure quite officially what Alderman Lawrence has promised—i.e. that the best (which need not exclude the merely interesting) of Sandgate will be conserved, and the new will be

designed to blend with the old and keep the overall character.

In connection with Sandgate's redevelopment, it is surprising that Councillor John Banfield did not consider worth mentioning the cost of the highly valuable Tweddell Report among the benefits conferred on Sandgate during his nine years as councillor.

Is this a diplomatic omission which suggests that payment for good advice (£3,400 out of a loan sanction of £17,900) now shelved is better left unmentioned?

There is one other point put to Alderman Lawrence at the informal meeting at the Chichester Hall on April 30, which needs deeper scrutiny, namely the waste and mess left after demolition of properties and dumping generally.

Surely the council has powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1962, section 36 (1) to bring pressure to bear on the offenders. It says:

‘If it appears to a local planning authority that the amenity of any part of their area, or of any adjoining area, is seriously injured by the condition of any garden, vacant site or other open land in their area, then, subject to any directions given by the Minister, the authority may serve on the owner and occupier of the land a notice requiring such steps for abating the injury as may be specified in the notice to be taken within such period as may be so specified.’

Any eyesore, or haven for rats and smells, is surely an injury to amenity which, put quite simply, means the pleasant enjoyment of the environment. — L. René-Martin (Mrs.), Coast Cottage, Sandgate.

know why the council of a pretty town like Hythe should allow this festering sore right in the middle of its seafront for all to see.

It is distressing to hear so many uncomplimentary remarks from visitors to the town.

This week the local elections take place and I would venture a hope that newly-elected councillors will apply themselves urgently to this problem, which has been swept under the carpet in the past.

The people of Hythe, who are usually so quiet and undemanding, are now insisting that action is taken.—O. H. W. Hider, Lyndhurst, St. Leonards Road, Hythe.

Christian Aid week

DURING the week of May 17-22, all churches in Folkestone will be working together to raise funds for Christian Aid.

Despite the title, many people who are not Christians subscribe to this, and, equally, many who are not Christians receive help.

This help is given with no strings of any kind attached — Christian Aid is not and never has been a missionary body.

Although always to the fore in bringing assistance when disaster occurs, this is only a lesser part of the work, which is chiefly concerned in helping the poorer countries to help themselves.

Schemes to assist in increasing food production, for technical instruction, for general education and many other worthwhile projects, are financed by Christian Aid, and, if nothing else, it is intelligent self-interest for the richer nations to do all they can to assist in this very worthwhile work.

I would appeal to all citizens of Folkestone, of whatever creed, to do all they can to support this Christian Aid

THE CONTINENT

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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY IN KENT

The Nature Conservancy, which was set up as a research council in 1949, is in effect the government ecological research and advisory agency. Its functions were laid down in its charter as being "to provide scientific advice on the conservation and control of the natural flora and fauna of Great Britain; to establish, maintain and manage nature reserves in Great Britain including the maintenance of physical features of scientific interest, and to organise and develop the research and scientific services related thereto". Statutory powers to enable these functions to be carried out were conferred in the same year by the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, enabling the Conservancy to establish National Nature Reserves, to advise Local Authorities on the establishment of Local Nature Reserves, and to notify Sites of Special Scientific Interest to County Planning Authorities.

In 1965 the Natural Environment Research Council was established, a body akin to the Medical Research Council, the Agricultural Research Council and the Science Research Council. The Nature Conservancy, like other government agencies concerned with research into the natural environment such as the Geological Survey, became a component body of this new Research Council. The Conservancy's activities now continue on behalf of the Council under the Department of Education and Science. Subsequent legislation to the National Parks Act, e.g. the Protection of Birds Act, 1967, and the Countryside Act, 1968, have conferred additional powers and responsibilities on the Nature Conservancy.

The Structure of the Conservancy

Within the organisation the Conservancy is divided into a Research Branch, a Conservation Branch and a number of sections which both service these branches and carry out independent activities. The Research Branch is housed in a number of research stations up and down the country where basic research into ecological problems is carried out. The Conservation Branch is organised on a regional basis with eleven regions in the country and deals with the management of reserves and advisory work. The work of the regional and research branches of the Conservancy is brought together by a structure of habitat teams made up of both research and regional branch scientists who convene regularly to discuss all aspects of the conservation of particular habitats. Thus, whilst there is no research station in Kent, indeed in the whole South East Region, there are a number of research branch scientists working on projects in the county and the regional staff are in close contact with the latest developments in research.

The Regional work in Kent

In addition to Kent the South East Region of the Conservancy includes the counties of Hertfordshire, Greater London, Surrey and Sussex. The bulk of the region's work at present falls into two broad categories, the management of reserves, and the work generated by other statutory sites, but changes in emphasis partially resulting from the Countryside Act, 1968 are beginning to take place and more attention is now being

directed towards the conservation not only of these sites of highest scientific interest, but to all natural plant and animal communities in the countryside. Kent provides the greatest work load in the region, and for this reason the Regional Office is in Kent, at Wye.

National Nature Reserves

Declared National Nature Reserves have the status of Crown Land. They are either owned, leased, or managed by the Nature Conservancy under Nature Reserve Agreements with the owners. Their principle function is to maintain representative examples of the natural plant and animal communities of the British Isles. Of the ten N.N.R.'s. in the South East Region, six are in Kent :

- (i) Blean woods lies three miles north of Canterbury. It consists largely of mixed woodland and coppice on the London Clay and is a locality for several species of rare insect. With the fall-off in demand for coppice timber for hop poles and other traditional uses, the extent of this type of woodland is declining. The management work on the reserve thus includes rotational cutting to maintain the coppice system so important to many insects. Wood ants are abundant. They prey on other insects and it is thought that they may threaten some of the rare species. Research is being carried out to see if this is in fact the case.
- (ii) Ham Street Woods is another woodland reserve of mixed coppice with standards, but is on the Weald Clay and differs in many respects from Blean Woods. It covers 250 acres of the old cliff line escarpment overlooking Romney Marsh approximately five miles south of Ashford. The woodland is also managed to maintain the coppice, but in addition much of its area is being managed to produce high forest. This reserve is also important for its insects and in addition for its magnificent displays of wood anemones, bluebells and foxgloves in the newly coppiced areas. Both these woodland reserves can be seen without a permit by using the footpaths which cross them.
- (iii) Northward Hill, High Halstow was established principally to maintain one of the largest heronries in the country. In 1968 there were 140 occupied nests. The reserve is owned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and managed by the Nature Conservancy for them under a Nature Reserve Agreement. It consists of 130 acres of woodland and scrub on the highland which forms the southern boundary of the marshes of the Thames Estuary, seven miles north of Rochester. Management work on the reserve has concentrated largely on maintaining a succession of scrub communities of different age which form the habitat of many species of small birds especially warblers.

(iv) Stodmarsh covers an area of approximately 400 acres in the valley of the Stour, five miles north-east of Canterbury, and is one of the most important ornithological localities in the south of the country. It includes extensive areas of reedbed, open water and grazing marsh. A wide variety of wildfowl and other marshland birds occur and breed in great numbers. The dykes contain many species of aquatic plants including several rarities. Management work on the reserve is directed at maintaining water levels and ensuring that a range of aquatic vegetation types is maintained to provide suitable habitats for the various species of birds. Lack of disturbance to the area is important, but public access is permitted along the flood barrier known as the Lampen Wall and also along the Stour river wall.

(v) Wye & Crundale Downs N.N.R. extends south-east for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles along the escarpment face of the North Downs from the Stour gap at Wye and covers about 250 acres. It was established principally to maintain the short turf grassland rich in wild flowers, but the reserve consists of about equal areas of grassland and woodland. Many rare plants occur on the reserve including 17 species of orchid. Rare insects are also found, and the dry valleys or coombes which fret the face of the escarpment are of great geological interest. The chalk grassland is maintained by grazing under licence, and in addition field trials using machine mowing and burning as techniques for maintaining the short turf are in progress. An access area at the top of the Devil's Kneading Trough is open to the public and in addition a number of footpaths cross the reserve from which most of the features of interest can be easily seen.

Liaison and Advisory Work

(i) Local Nature Reserves

These are sites of the highest scientific value, are of the same status as National Nature Reserves, but are established and managed by the County Council or Local Authority in whose areas the site lies. County Councils frequently designate their management to County Naturalists' Trusts or other voluntary bodies. The Nature Conservancy's role is limited to advising the local authority with regard to the scientific merits of a proposed reserve and on its management when declared. In the S. E. Region Kent is very much to the forefront in the declaration of L.N.R.'s. of which there are now three in the county. A very great deal of credit for this must go to the County Council and the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation.

(ii) Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Sites of Special Scientific Interest are areas of high scientific value which are formally notified to the County Planning Authorities who are then statutorily bound to consult the Nature Conservancy before granting planning permission if a development application affecting the site arises. The Nature Conservancy's observation on the probable effect

of the proposed development on the scientific interest of the site have to be taken into consideration by the Planning Authority when making its decision whether to grant planning permission. The Planning Authority need not, however, necessarily follow the Conservancy's recommendations.

In Kent there are 75 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. In 1969 the Region dealt with 71 development applications affecting these sites. The Conservancy maintains consultative arrangements with the Forestry Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Gas and Electricity Authorities and the Ministry of Transport, in addition to its statutory responsibilities to the County Planning Authorities. Development from these sources is also included in the above total. Liaison is maintained with the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation whose supply of local and specialist expertise is drawn upon by the regional staff in making its observations on planning applications to the County Planning Officer. Since 1967 five development applications have led to Public Inquiries where the Conservancy has appeared to oppose development for scientific reasons.

Biological Conservation and the Functions of Nature Reserves.

Why is it necessary to establish protected areas to maintain examples of natural plant and animal communities? There are many reasons. Those of the Nature Conservancy are primarily scientific. Nature conservation, or more precisely biological conservation, is essentially a rationale for the scientific exploitation of biological resources according to ecological principles to ensure that their capacity for self regeneration is not destroyed. The remarkable thing about biological resources is that they differ quite fundamentally from nearly all other natural resources like oil, minerals, even historical monuments, ancient buildings and so forth in that they have this remarkable capacity for renewal. Living organisms have the unique ability to reproduce and this makes nature conservation quite, quite different from any other kind of conservation. Conservation in the biological sense is not preservation, not the holding over of a resource for the future when it will be used up anyway, i.e. eking it out, but a scientifically controlled exploitation to ensure that the ability of natural systems to maintain themselves is not upset. The study of natural systems or ecosystems is the science of ecology, and biological conservation is essentially applied ecology. An understanding of the ways in which ecosystems work is the key to their exploitation and this applies equally to agricultural and horticultural ecosystems. Undisturbed examples of natural plant and animal communities are essential for this vital research, and this is one of the main justifications of reserves and other protected areas.

There are many other cogent reasons for the establishment of protected areas. Allied to their use for scientific research is their role in education. The training of environmental scientists cannot be easily carried out without resource to undisturbed ecosystems. In addition our wild plant and animal populations are an important resource in their own right, particularly as stores of genetic variation which can be of great importance in the breeding of new crop plants and animals. The ancestral forms of nearly all our crop plants for example still occur in the wild,

many of them in this country, and all of us have probably at some time in eating bread made from disease resistant wheat strains been indebted to the survival of these "weeds" in the wild and their continued availability to the plant breeder.

Not least in the functions of reserves is their aesthetic and recreational value. Natural history is an important recreation, and in addition nearly everyone enjoys the countryside, and the birds, butterflies and wild flowers are an integral part of that which they enjoy. This reason alone to most people more than justifies the creation of reserves.

Positive Conservation

This defence of the best remaining areas for wildlife is clearly an essential part of conservation. It is, however, basically a negative, protectionist, approach and is not enough in itself to guarantee the future of our wildlife resources. It is now beginning to be appreciated that however numerous and extensive nature reserves are they can never guarantee the survival of more than a very small fraction of the natural plant and animal communities in the country. They are too small, too scattered, and too discrete. The value of reserves and other protected areas lies very much in their relation with the surrounding land. The future of our wildlife rests in the countryside as a whole and with agricultural intensification there is no doubt that the bulk of our natural plant and animal communities will come to rely more and more on hedgerows, roadside verges, parks, estates, golf courses, the grounds of hospitals and other large establishments for their survival. Public open spaces are particularly important in this respect and Kent, especially east Kent, compared with some other counties in the S.E., is unfortunately very badly served with them. It is imperative that these areas are managed to maintain their scientific interest and that the land managers who look after them are aware of the best ways of doing this. Reserves and other protected areas have two roles in this respect. They act as reservoirs of natural plant and animal populations which can be artificially or naturally spread from reserves into these areas in the countryside as a whole, and they serve as areas where techniques of management of natural plant and animal populations can be evaluated for subsequent passing on to land managers. The latter is an important function, and field trials using machinery of the kind normally available to land managers for the management of motorway verges and other public open spaces are in progress on reserves in the region.

There is additionally a growing realisation amongst conservationists that one cannot be too purist about natural undisturbed habitats. In this country there are very few, if any, examples of truly natural communities. Ecologists accepting this fact talk only in terms of semi-natural vegetation. The scientific interest of most plant, animal communities in the British Isles has arisen under a very specific form of land management practice, and to ensure the continuity of the scientific interest this management has to be maintained.

Plant and animal communities are not static, they change. Chalk grassland left ungrazed or unmown for example quickly scrubs over and loses

its great diversity of wild flowers. Any area of bare or disturbed ground is very quickly colonised by vegetation. This is superseded by different types of vegetation as the habitat conditions are changed by the formation of soil, reduction of exposure, and general amelioration of environmental extremes which the initial colonising vegetation brings about. Natural processes in this way have a great ability to re-adjust the environmental conditions to what they were before any form of disturbance took place. Very little that man can do is final so far as its effects on natural environment are concerned. Chalk grasslands may be ploughed, woods uprooted, commons burnt, even meadows covered in concrete, yet as soon as the development activity has ceased the natural vegetation will immediately begin to re-establish itself. Given sufficient time almost any area in the British Isles, no matter what its present land use, could be made into a Nature Reserve. With a little help in the form of planting, and the introduction of species by other means, the time involved need not be very long at all. Nature Reserves can be created from the least promising beginnings.

Kent is very fortunate in having one of the very few examples of this kind of positive conservation within its borders. The W.A.G.B.I./Wildfowl Trust experimental reserve which Dr. Jeffery Harrison has been largely responsible for in both concept, design, and execution, is a splendid example showing that a first rate ornithological site can be created in a few years from a worked out gravel pit.

Ecological Survey and Land Use Planning

With the increasing awareness of the importance of conservation in the countryside outside protected areas an ever greater proportion of the Nature Conservancy's work is being directed to ecological survey and to the provision of advice on land management for wild life. The conservation of natural plant and animal communities is a land management objective which can be easily reconciled with many others. Golf courses, commons, motorway verges, large estates and other parkland contain some of the best and most extensive areas still left of natural vegetation and its associated animals. Agricultural intensification leading to changes in farm practice such as the removal of hedgerows add to the importance of such areas for wildlife. Recognising this, nine reports have been prepared by the South East Region for planning authorities and other organisations holding land. They define the scientific interest of the areas, recommend how this can be increased and advise how other forms of land use can be reconciled with the maintenance of the ecological interest. Reclamation for agriculture, and particularly land drainage, have greatly reduced the extent of natural wetlands and in the South East they are one of the habitats under greatest threat. Happily, reservoirs, gravel pits and other artificial wetlands are to some extent supplementing the loss of natural wetlands, but such areas are subject to tremendous demands from all sorts of recreational interests, particularly sailing and fishing. Reflecting these pressures on wetlands most of the Region's reports have been concerned with reservoirs, gravel pits and other inland and coastal waters.

The data in these reports relies largely on field survey of natural vegetation and wildlife resources. The advice given in them is based upon research carried out in the Research Branch of the Conservancy, on field trials carried out on the reserves, and on practical experience such as that gained by Dr. Harrison at Sevenoaks. Far too little is known in both these fields. Whilst in the South East most of the more interesting localities for wildlife are very well known, there is still a great dearth of information on the basic fabric of our wildlife resources in the countryside. Surveys of the nature, distribution and extent of the major habitats in the countryside must form an important part of our conservation in the future. Much more research is also required into techniques for the management of natural plant and animal communities and into ways of establishing them. Here again Kent is to the forefront. The work of Hector Wilks and other members of the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation in the propagation of orchid populations is another excellent example of positive conservation, which will be of central relevance in the establishment of natural grassland communities with their great diversity of wild flowers in country parks, on roadway verges and other such areas in the future. All this may smack rather of gardening and zoos to the purist. There is no doubt, however, that for conservation to succeed it must be appreciated by all those engaged in it that a purely protectionist outlook has no future. It must be realised that all natural plant and animal communities must be managed, that the great majority of them can be created, and that the future of our natural plant and animal communities lies in ensuring that this takes place in the countryside.

DR. B. H. GREEN
(Regional Officer, S.E.)

January, 1970.
The Nature Conservancy,
Wye, Ashford, Kent.

Copy sent to DG VORLEY. This resulted from my telephone enquiry to Mr. Sayers, KCC whether the survey had been returned to him yet by the ^FB.C.
 kindest regards, Linda

Borough of Folkestone

Borough Engineer, Surveyor
& Planning Officer:
T. G. Greening, C.Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E., M.Inst.H.E.

Civic Centre
Castle Hill Avenue
Folkestone Kent
Tel. 55221 (STD 0303)

Your Ref.

Our Ref. BE/GT

3rd November, 1970

Dear Mrs. René-Martin,

Proposed Conservation Area

I have looked into the question of the delay in submission of your report to the Council and the relevant dates are as follows -

- (1) 6th May 1970
The Council's proposed Conservation Areas were sent to the County Planning Officer after considering the observations of those interested - including the Sandgate Society.
- (2) 22nd June 1970
A letter dated 18th June was received from the County Planning Officer, acknowledging receipt of my letter of the 6th May and pointing out that they had received your Report and would be letting me have it as soon as possible so that the Council's observations could be obtained.
- (3) 15th July 1970
Report received with a letter asking for acknowledgement of receipt of the Report.
- (4) 6th August 1970
Report returned to you.
- (5) 24th August 1970
Letter (dated 20th August) received from County Planning Officer asking for Council's views.
- (6) 26th August 1970
I wrote to the County Planning Officer pointing out that (erroneously as it later transpired) this was the first intimation that I had that he (the County Planning Officer) wanted the Council's observations on the Report.
- (7) 17th September 1970
County Planning Officer replied (dated 15th September) confirming that the Council's views were required.
- (8) 18th September 1970
I wrote to the Secretary of the Sandgate Society asking formally for their observations and for the return of the Report with a view to it being reported to the Town Planning Committee on the 7th October. I wrote in similar terms the same day to the County Planning Officer.
- (9) 26th September 1970
Reply received from the Sandgate Society endorsing the principles embodied in your report.

Continued/...

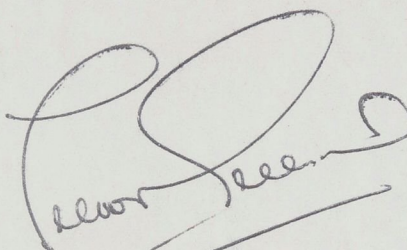
The person dealing with this matter on my behalf is Borough Engineer Ext. 302

All correspondence to be addressed to the Borough Engineer.

(10) About 21st October 1970
Your report received in a parcel by post, but with no covering letter or other mark indicating the sender.

I am extremely sorry for my part in the delay which I can only attribute to the fact that I was under the impression the Report was submitted to me in July for information only, as I was informed on the 16th July that it had not been seen at that date by the Sandgate Society. However, I have the report now and it will be submitted to the Town Planning Committee next week.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Green

Borough Engineer

Mrs. Rene-Martin,
Flat J,
4 Oxford & Cambridge Mansions,
Old Marylebone Road,
London, N.W.1.

KENT TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

Countryside Conference - 2nd March, 1970

"Pressures on the Countryside"

by R.G. Clarke, M.T.P.I., A.M.I.Mun.E.,
County Planning Officer - Kent.

1. Conservation of the countryside embraces a great many considerations, yet it is only one of the facets of the physical environment to which a local planning authority must give attention. For that reason alone I have felt it right to write this paper in general terms, for neither a local planning authority nor its planning officer can or should adopt too specialist an approach, but rather should welcome specialist advice on particular subjects from those best qualified to give it. I shall not attempt, therefore, to suggest in this paper the proper extent or character of nature conservation in Kent nor how such conservation might best be reflected in Kent's planning policies, and I hope that the County Council will in due course receive advice and suggestions from the Trust and others as to those matters. I have no doubt that this Conference will assist that process. My purpose here is rather to describe the background of planning policy and likely developments in Kent, against which the conservation of nature, and the life of the countryside generally must be considered.
2. Kent, like South-East England generally, faces great changes during the next decade, probably greater and more rapid than those that have occurred in the recent past, and the impetus for change is likely to accelerate in the later years of this century. The county lies well within London's influence, which is felt not only in the numbers of people who want to come and live here, but in our ways of life, whether it be employment, shopping or the ways in which we spend our leisure. The numbers of people expected to have to be accommodated in Kent by 1981 alone (this being a convenient date for planning purposes) represent a considerable
/problem.

problem. The Government's South East Study, and its Review, published in 1966 estimated that between 1964 and 1981 Kent's share of population growth would involve an increase of 233,000, of whom 140,000 would be accommodated in the western half of Kent, and 93,000 in East Kent. These figures excluded "planned" expansions, such as that which was suggested at Ashford and the possibility of expansion schemes at Sheppey and Aylesham. In East Kent there is already sufficient land set aside for development to accommodate a population increase of about 150,000, so that the increase there could well be greater than that foreseen by the Government. The proposal to create a new City of 250,000 - 300,000 people in the Ashford area, which was strongly opposed in Kent, has mercifully been abandoned, at least for the time being. The figures I have given are the latest Government demands which Kent is expected to meet up to 1981. They relate to the period 1964 - 1981 and of course there is no reason to suppose that further population growth on a scale difficult to absorb will not have to be provided for in the last twenty years of the Twentieth Century. At present a new framework for planning in South East England is being worked out. Its implications for Kent are not known at the time of this Conference, but certainly they are not likely to be less than were suggested when the forecasts on which the South East Study was based were made. A team drawn from both Central and Local Government, under the direction of Dr. Wilfred Burns, the Chief Planning Officer of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, is making this new study and is expected to report to the Minister in the course of 1970.

3. Growth of the order I have mentioned inevitably involves building on large areas of land hitherto left open. If this were to take place by peppercorn growth, as it undoubtedly would if the development process were left entirely uncontrolled, I have no doubt that the consequences for Kent's countryside would be very serious indeed. The County Council has no intention of allowing this to happen. Strict control is being exercised to confine such new development to existing communities and to keep

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the spread of these within reasonable bounds. The pressures for building on the fringe of settlements, or outside them, will be severe, however, and if policies to retain the countryside are to be successful, even small developments will usually have to be resisted, and 'safety valves' provided elsewhere. Such policies will not be popular with everyone, but I believe that most people will take the view that Kent's countryside is irreplaceable, and worth strong measures to protect it.

4. Not all of the population growth foreseen can be accommodated by minor extensions to existing communities, and new or greatly expanded towns, or new neighbourhoods of existing towns, and possibly new villages, may have to be accepted. The major new city in the Ashford area mentioned earlier, which was studied two or three years ago would have involved taking as much as 25,000 acres of Wealden countryside for development. The pressures from this new centre would also have rippled out over a very wide area and would have affected villages in a radius of at least 15 miles. The County Council has in mind that major growth on the Isle of Sheppey should be encouraged, and other more modest schemes elsewhere cannot be ruled out.

5. Large scale population growth in Kent does not mean only the loss of land for houses. The growth of suitable local employment is a pre-requisite to population growth, and this in turn involves demands for more land for development. Moreover, the patterns of movement for both people and goods develop and become both more extensive and more complex, and a much improved system of major roads through the countryside between the urban areas becomes necessary. The degree of improvement necessary will be considerably accentuated in the event of a Channel Tunnel coming into being, and the County Road Plan takes this into consideration as far as possible on present information, assuming a terminal between Ashford and Folkestone. County highways policy is aimed in the main at strengthening the existing road network rather than providing a new system of primary trunk routes, but also of providing a new main route forming the South Orbital route from the Dartford Tunnel to

/Staines

Staines via Redhill, and links thereto from A.20. The South Orbital Road will be an urban motorway linking the towns on the circumference of the Greater London area. The A.20 on its existing alignment, or incorporating major diversions on a fresh alignment, is planned to become a motorway throughout its length as far as the Channel Tunnel terminal. Even so it appears doubtful whether the improvement of the A.20 and of the A.2 to motorway standard can carry the amount of traffic possible between the London area and the Channel ports and a third principal route may have to be considered. Any deficiency in the capacity of these roads would be increased if further substantial development were undertaken in North or East Kent, such as major growth on Sheppey.

6. So far the possibility of a Third London Airport settling anywhere in Kent has been averted. The use of Sheppey was for some time seriously canvassed and would have had profound effects, not so much from the impingement of the airport itself upon what is now a remote and rural area, but from the consequential need to establish what would have amounted to a new city related to the new airport. This could not have been done on the Island itself, nor could peripheral growth of the Medway Towns have met the need, and development on a large scale either on the North Downs, which seems unthinkable, or on agricultural land which has been described by the Ministry of Agriculture as some of the best land in the country (not county), would have had to be seriously considered.

7. Perhaps, however, of all possible future developments in Kent the one which most exercises our minds is the proposed Channel Tunnel. Possible arrangements for the terminal facilities were published by me in December 1968 and the views of everyone interested upon the merits of the alternatives were sought. The County Council has taken into account every representation and suggestion made in formulating its own views which have been conveyed to the Government. A project of this kind, if decided upon in the national interest cannot, of course,

/fail

fail to have a marked effect upon the area where terminal facilities must be provided. It is however very much to be hoped that, given that a new link across the Channel of this kind is to be provided, the consultation with the public generally and the careful examination by the local planning authority of the whole project will result in the least possible harm being done to this most attractive area of East Kent. The County Council is most appreciative of the fact that it was asked to help in achieving the best solution of a difficult problem and it is to be hoped that this is what in the end will be achieved. As to the question whether new industrial and commercial developments will be attracted to the Tunnel terminal area, my personal belief is that large scale development of this kind will rather be attracted to Northern France, and that such as must be on this side of the Channel can be accommodated in Ashford and Folkestone. Certainly the County Council regards the retention of the open country between those two centres, except as may be essential to meet operational needs, as a planning consideration of the first importance.

8. Developments in Kent have long been influenced by the County's proximity to London and to the continent of Europe. The proposed Channel Tunnel is a modern consequence of this relationship. The same circumstances have led to proposals for hoverports on our coast and have given rise also to the suggestions that an alternative London airport could be located at Cliffe or at Sheppey. There can be no doubt I think that Kent's disposition in relation to London and to the continent will continue to involve the county in proposals of national significance. In the field of fuel and energy, developments of national or regional importance have taken or are expected to take place in Kent - at Dungeness where nuclear generated electricity is fed into the country's super-grid system, and at Kingsnorth and Littlebrook, where coal or oil-fired generating stations are expected eventually to supplement supplies for the Greater London, and indeed a wider area. New sites for power stations are being investigated on the

Hoo Peninsula. The oil refinery on the Isle of Grain, the third largest in Britain, forms a noteworthy part of our economy and scenery, and the estuary shores there may well prove attractive for additional refining activities. The development of the Lower Medway area as a major port is also being seriously considered.

9. In these cases frequently the interests of nature conservation are directly and seriously affected. The siting requirements of refineries and power stations often mean the use of coastal locations and such new developments as hoverports will have similar location requirements: yet it is in such places in Kent that natural life and natural beauty have remained hitherto relatively undisturbed, and there are very few areas remaining which retain the "remote" quality they have had up to recent years. These conflicting circumstances necessitate the most strenuous and devoted efforts to ensure that only those developments which are vital to the national economy are allowed to intrude upon the peace of the natural coastal environment that remains, and that such intrusion is kept to a minimum. The obtrusive effects of power stations make themselves felt far beyond the stations themselves and vigorous arguments are likely to continue over the need to carry power distribution lines overland. Without strong, widespread and continuing general interest in matters of this kind there is a danger that the necessary efforts to ameliorate the effects of such development on the countryside will not be vigorously pursued. It is not necessary to the efficiency of power lines that they be laid underground, but it is highly desirable so far as the total environment of man is concerned. Similar considerations apply to the problem of noise.

10. The interests of nature conservation involve at some time most aspects of development. Even changes in the organisation, techniques or policies of agriculture and forestry, can be disturbing, but they can be also of eventual benefit, providing valuable sites for recreation and areas of scientific interest.

/Abandoned

Abandoned wet gravel workings may become bird sanctuaries; quarries give access to cross-sections of geological strata and sometimes enclose and support unique habitats. Kent generally speaking is rich in surface mineral resources and large-scale extraction has occurred already mainly on Thames-side and in the Lower Medway and Stour Valleys. Existing sand and gravel workings are fast becoming worked out, and other land, the subject of planning permission for sand and gravel extraction, is not likely to meet the demand for long. Seaborne supplies and sea-dredged material are becoming increasingly used in the County but are not expected to become the main sources of supply for the County as a whole. Fresh reserves used to be allocated to meet normal demand, but they would need to be augmented on a massive scale in the event of some of the major developments in Kent which have been suggested going forward at the same time. The situation is under close study; a comprehensive survey of future requirements is being made in conjunction with the Sand and Gravel Association, members of the industry, the local authorities and other organisations who could be affected by extractive operations, before land allocations are made. Chalk, clay and brickearth, and ragstone, the other main surface mineral resources in the County, all present problems, but in the future these will relate increasingly to the present areas of working as the County Council's restrictive policy on the opening of quarries in new areas gains in effect.

11. What I have been considering so far are the direct effects on land of actual, proposed or possible developments - the building of houses and of factories and offices, the improvement and construction of roads and railway lines, the erection of power stations and refineries and the excavation of minerals - all of which take land out of its agricultural or natural state for conversion to another, much more intensive use. Land so treated represents an absolute loss of land of agricultural or natural significance; additionally it is likely to damage the value and beauty of adjoining land.

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There are also indirect effects which although not abruptly changing the character of land, nonetheless can threaten its harmony by degrading its character over the course of years; and these indirect effects are those resulting from population growth and from improvements in the standards of living of society. It seems a paradox that the advancement of our civilisation, through technological achievements and increased education, should produce rather than resolve problems of environmental control and management. But we belong to a dynamic society well into its second industrial revolution, and all the time new environments are being created. It is surely understandable that the industrial worker and urban dweller - and most of this country's population have only ever lived in towns - find it difficult to appreciate fully the need for care in the countryside. Great numbers of people now leave the towns not only at weekends and at summer holiday times but also in mid-week and at all other seasons of the year in search of recreation, and elightenment too. Kent is wholly within reach of Greater London, as well as having a large and increasing population of its own.

12. In 1965 the County Council began to investigate the practicability of establishing regional country parks on the lines later suggested in the Government White Paper "Leisure in the Countryside" which gave encouragement to local planning authorities to plan now for the full enjoyment of the countryside and the protection of its natural beauty, and which is provided for in the Countryside Act. The White Paper noted that the choice at present for people seeking recreation away from the towns rests among a visit to the coast, to a country house or garden, to a limited number of recognised beauty spots, or to a National Park or Nature Reserve. These may or may not be at a convenient distance and may be difficult of access. Very rarely are there extensive areas with grass and trees, and water, where car parking is readily catered for, where one may picnic or ramble without restriction, and where

/there

there are opportunities for games. Yet, as the White Paper pointed out, a large and increasing number of people will probably continue to spend a large part of their free time in their cars visiting the countryside and the coast; and the number of cars, which is at present nine million in the country as a whole, is expected to reach twenty-six million by 1980. Thus the need for 'country parks' is defined: places where town-dwellers would be able to enjoy their leisure in the open without travelling too far and adding to congestion on the roads; places which would reduce the risk of damage to the countryside as a whole and would ease the pressure on the more remote and solitary places. The divergent interests of those who visit the countryside simply for relaxation or active recreation and of those whose concern is primarily with the conservation or study of its natural or man-made features have also to be reconciled. A major task will be to stimulate and co-ordinate education in the need to conserve the unique features of the countryside.

13. Substantial parts of the county are defined and managed as national and local nature reserves and many places have been notified to the local planning authority as being sites of special scientific interest. Definitive maps have been prepared showing the public rights of way. In July, 1969, the Minister of Housing and Local Government approved the route of a long distance footpath in Kent, mainly along the slopes of the North Downs, from the Surrey border to the coast at Folkestone with a continuation to Dover and a branch route from Boughton Lees in the Great Stour Valley via Canterbury to Dover. The Countryside Commission is now considering the detailed implementation of the proposals in conjunction with the County Council. In July, 1968, the Minister of Housing and Local Government confirmed an Order designating the Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, comprising about 326 square miles situated in the county of Kent and partly in the area of south-east Greater London. In the main the area is the crests and slopes of the North Downs between Westerham and

the cliffs between Folkestone and Dover with a short section of the Lower Greensand Ridge westwards from Hythe to near Bilsington. There is also a detached area of the cliff tops between Dover and Kingsdown.

14. Fro 1970 - 71 the County Council has made substantial capital provision in its Budget towards implementation of the Countryside Act 1969, and it may well be that the next year will see the first steps towards the establishment of the first country park in Kent. Several areas of search have been examined and sites are well on the way towards being identified. At Dryhill Quarry, Chevening, Sevenoaks Rural District, the County Council has already made the first moves towards providing a picnic area. This proposal seems to have caught the public imagination. Dryhill Quarry was opened to provide material for the construction of the Sevenoaks Bypass. One of the conditions attached to the planning permission (imposed by the County Council on itself!) was that the site should be restored to a useful purpose, and of course landscaped. A planting scheme was prepared and plans for the eventual use as a picnic area of the site, which is close to two major routes, have been agreed. Much of the necessary tree planting has already been carried out in collaboration with the Automobile Association "Drive to Plant a Tree" Scheme. Discussions on suitable locations in Kent for country parks are proceeding, and account is being taken of a number of factors including the need to avoid using or disturbing good agricultural land, the necessity for good road access, and the importance of co-operation between all local authorities and organisations concerned with rural land use. Physical character is a leading factor in finding suitable land, which preferably should be centred on a large water area, and/or offer panoramic views. The question of planning for leisure has led, I think, to a changing attitude among those whose concern is for the countryside from one of preservation and a limited use of the land to one of conservation and the acceptance that the life of the countryside must evolve in order to survive.

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With the growing demands that are now being made upon it, and provided that compatability can be assured, a multiple use of rural land appears to be desirable. And whilst, as a 'Times' leader declared - "it is only half of the matter to say that the countryside's resources should match the needs of the nation, there should be a corresponding drive to teach the national how to use the countryside" - it is also only by direct contact with those resources that people will learn to appreciate them and to value them.

15. While I have referred specifically to the countryside, similar considerations apply, but with rather more force to our coastal areas, and the safeguarding of the natural attractions of the sea coast and river estuaries for holiday, recreational, scientific, and amenity purposes. Three principal categories of coastline have been identified as being mainly free from development. In areas coming within two of the categories new development normally will be prevented, and in the areas included in the third category only development which will make a positive contribution to the public enjoyment of those areas will normally be allowed. The County Council proposes, in consultation with the local authorities concerned and with the other interested organisations, to take steps to secure the best use of coastal lands (1) by the reservation of parts to serve special amenity and/or scientific interest, (2), by the definition of locations where facilities for recreation and for holidays can be developed, and (3) by the restoration of lost amenities, including the removal of eyesores. Certain coastal and estuarine locations may be required in the national interest for purposes of industry and commerce, but the local planning authority's general policy will be sub-ordinated only to a proved national need.

16. The next point I would like to make concerns changes which are taking place in areas which are still truly part of the countryside. For example, the Weald of Kent in particular is no longer an area of large woodlands.

/Indeed,

Indeed, there are very few really large woods in the Weald; it is a wooded landscape in which the small shaws and hedgerows play a most important part. It is also an area in which hardwood and broad-leaved species are the principal characteristics, which it would be unfortunate to lose. In the Weald one expects to find deciduous hardwoods and I observe that the conversion of deciduous woodlands to conifer plantations and to chestnut coppice on a wholesale scale must so alter the character of the Weald as to represent a serious loss. I am sure, however, that I am not the best contributor to deal with this issue but it seems to me to come under the category of pressures on the countryside. Certainly there is pressure from agriculture itself upon the maintenance of woodlands which are an integral part of what we have known as the Kent countryside, when the grubbing of woodlands and hedgerows and transfer to arable cultivation may be financially attractive.

17. I think it may be fairly said that the local planning authority is facing up to the challenge not only of meeting the great and increasing demands being made upon our coast and countryside, demands for land for development and for leisure, in a practical and rational way, but also sensitively, so as to reduce any disturbance to a minimum, and to afford what protection is within the authority's power for the places where there remains a complete and unspoiled natural environment. Protection lies very largely in ensuring that there is no need for people to search about for suitable places at which to enjoy the open air and the scenery by providing at a few well-chosen and well-managed localities the very opportunities and facilities that are generally required. Thus the nature reserves can be freed of the intolerable burden being placed upon them by people seeking general recreation, and be enabled to provide unhindered the opportunities for botanical and other scientific studies expected of them. It is to be anticipated that rapidly

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increasing numbers of people will wish to use the nature reserves for studies, as a result not only of population increases themselves but as a consequence of a growing interest in and of a growing desire for contact with the natural environment. The fulfilment of these particular needs is a challenge to all concerned with nature conservation.

18. As I have explained the local planning authority is itself now taking active steps to solve the problem of leisure needs of an ever more numerous, more wealthy and more mobile population. In this search the authority relies greatly on expert advice from, and co-operation with, all the other authorities and organisations involved in the problem. The wish of the local planning authority for full consultation is I think a happy and an agreeable note to end on - that we may look forward to solving together in the time ahead a compelling and vital problem.

CONSERVATION

and the

LANDOWNER

by

Lord Brabourne,

President: The Kent Trust for
Nature Conservation.

CONSERVATION AND THE LANDOWNER

Landowners as a whole tend to be a little suspect in the eyes of Conservationists. Those who, like myself are both, would like to see a much more active partnership between the two interests. European Conservation Year gives us a stimulus to review the apparent differences in approach to the Countryside, and to see if we can be more practical in establishing the sort of relationship which really does form a working partnership.

It is all too easy to appreciate the points of difference. The Landowner may appear on occasions to be a ruthless exploiter; after all we are all engaged in one way or another in the commercial exploitation of land- that is what landowning is all about. The conservationist may sometimes appear to be an idealist with his head in the clouds and his feet on quite the wrong ground. The last decade has shown a welcome tendency for the two points of view to be more constructively debated, but the rapid and continuing developments in technology over the same period have made it even more urgent for us to work more closely together. If we don't, I believe that the countryside as we know it is bound to change, probably irreversibly, in a way which both of us and many others, would very much regret.

I do not believe that our commercial exploitation of the land need spoil the countryside- certainly not the best parts of it and its general character. After all the English landscape, still in great measure a delight to the eye is the product of centuries of management by landowners; maybe in the past this management was largely directed towards the landowners personal interests, but the fact remains that what the conservationists are striving to protect today derives almost entirely from the activities of past landowners.

Today, conflicting interests become more and more evident; they arise from increasing population, increasing development, and increasing mobility. The Press and T.V. have helped to bring these conflicts into the open, but they sometimes hinder by overstatement or by emphasising only one aspect of a complex situation. The heart of the problem is the multiple use requirement. The countryside has to serve a great many needs because it is a place to live in, to work in, and to play in. Industry wants some of it for factories and the people who work in the factories want to live near them. Farmers want it to grow food and foresters to grow timber. Literally millions of people, especially townspeople, want to use it for recreation, often in different ways which are not mutually compatible. Somehow, our development plans for the countryside must be made to evolve so that they meet these conflicting demands as fairly as possible, and at the same time strike a realistic balance between demand and capacity. National and local authorities will no doubt dictate the strategy but the collective attitude and action of landowners will have an immense influence on the character and content of tomorrow's countryside.

How landowners manage their land, and their attitude towards the wild life on it, is obviously a matter of outlook. Most landowners are countrymen, and those who are not sooner or later come to learn country ways of thinking, and develop an appreciation of the values of the countryside. Lord Henley recently observed that "no fisherman worth the name will grudge the heron his fish" that is country thinking. Some conservationists appear to believe that landowners think only of return on capital employed, and have no regard for the future and no appreciation of the extent to which the traditional countryside is at risk. This is seldom the case, and although economic pressures on landowners seem always to be increasing, there are many ways in which they can use their initiative in reacting to these pressures.

The use of chemicals, woodland policy, and the effect of mechanisation on working unit size are cases in point. Pollution has recently become an active political and public issue; attempts are being made to deal with its problems internationally. We are at last beginning to realise that the struggle is no longer man versus nature, but rather man versus himself. It is for governments to initiate many of the things which will have to be done if we are not going to destroy ourselves, or make life so sterile and circumscribed that it would be unacceptable, but there is also a great deal which we can do as individuals. It becomes increasingly

clear that the long term effects, and side-effects, of pesticides and herbicides take longer to become apparent than their users have, until now, been willing to accept as a sensible proving period. The conclusion must be to use them with even greater caution, and to give even more attention to the problem of effluent, spillage, spent containers etc., which are usually associated with chemical control. On the global scale, Lord Ritchie Calder has spoken of "a crime compounded of ignorance and avarice". In the context of their own land management, landowners can make sure that they are not open to similar criticism.

In the case of woodlands, the main complaint of the conservationist -ist is that the replacement of traditional mixed woodland by conifers is being taken too far and too fast. No one will doubt the soundness of the economics which have led to a substantial change in forestry management practice, but it can be over done. It can be tempting to make a clean sweep in the interests of a simpler operation and a quicker crop, only to find that in large areas the gain is at best marginal. The immediate adverse effects on wild life and amenity are evident, as in the use of chemicals, unsuspected side-effects take a long time to show themselves, and it must be prudent to proceed with caution. It is encouraging to the conservationist to see the evolution of Forestry Commission policy. In recent years there has been a growing provision of woodland for amenity, and substantial areas of mixed woodland are being maintained. The Commission works very closely with county conservation trusts, and has made a number of agreements to establish nature reserves within its woodlands. This practice could with advantage be extended into private woodlands to a far greater extent than has at present been done.

In the case of increased working unit size, much publicity has already been given to the undesirability of continuing to destroy hedges at the rate of several thousand miles a year, to the possible dangers of creating dust bowl effects, and to the appearance of unexpected changes in the working characteristics of the soil. The adverse effects on wild life and amenity are just as evident as in the example of changing woodland practice. All these changes are features of increasing mechanisation, and no doubt the correct balance of unit size for any particular area and crop will evolve by trial and error; whatever happens there will still be some hedges, some shelter belts and some game coverts. One particular feature of mechanisation is the squaring-off of fields; odd corners can be planted with advantage to man, bird and beast. The more mixed the trees and scrub in such plantings, the better for the wildlife.

In these three examples, I have tried to emphasise that change is not only inevitable but desirable. Agricultural chemicals and advanced machinery are an immense help to landowners and make a major contribution to the efficiency of our industry, which is among the highest in the world. The point surely is that the more we bring them into use the more we should take steps to balance any adverse effects which they may have on the various amenities which so many of us are anxious to preserve.

Government policy and legislation relating to the countryside is inevitable complicated. The conservationist is apt to cite occasions on which, in his view, landowners act against the spirit of declared policy but within the clauses of the law. For example, provision is made for the scheduling of sites of special scientific interest, and planning officers are asked to protect them as far as possible from development. But any field or wood so scheduled may be ploughed or felled without any restraint, as long as the new use is an agricultural one. There are often apparent conflicts of interest between, for example, the Ministries of Agriculture and Defence or the Countryside Commission and the Nature Conservancy, and these are reflected in the various ways in which a landowner may be encouraged to manage his land or in which its use is restricted or redefined. The landowner more than anyone else is involved in the practical implementation of all these policies and regulations, and, as in my previous examples, he can usually exercise a great deal of initiative in deciding what happens to any particular area. What is marginal to the landowner is often of high priority to the conservationist, and where there is a conflict of interest between them if communications are good, an acceptable working compromise can usually be made. Inadequate communications are still too common, and

and in general I believe that it is for the landowner to give the lead. Some public landowners are already using their powers very effectively to help conservation, new reservoirs for example, are being built with plans to segregate different areas as nature reserves, or for yachting or angling. On a smaller scale, any substantial change of land use can often incorporate features to meet many different user requirements without any conflict with the main objective. Early consultation is the crux of the matter; if left too late, what would have been desirable will have become uneconomic.

Another matter at issue is sport in the Countryside. Apart from being traditional and widespread, they can also be profitable; a recent Financial Times article referred to pheasants as "a farm crop which can, in some cases, raise the capital value of land by as much as £60 an acre". The pursuit of these sports is deplored by some people as being unethical; this is a personal view and I do not think it has anything to do with the question of whether or not there is a conflict between sport and conservation. The whole subject has been clouded by prejudice in the past, but fortunately is now being considered much more objectively. Organisations such as the Game Conservancy and the Wildfowlers Association operate primarily in the interests of field sports, but there is convincing evidence that their work to conserve game also helps to conserve a great variety of other wild life. The butterfly that breeds in a wood may in fact depend on pheasant shooting for its survival. Irresponsible shooting and poaching are a menace to the conservationist and landowner alike, and are not the point at issue. "Every responsible wildfowler", wrote Dr. Jeffery Harrison in County Life "is also by definition a conservationist." The more objectively the problem is considered, the more will this particular responsibility be practised by sportsmen and accepted by conservationists.

In the long run, I believe that the overall problem can only be resolved by improved public understanding of what is at stake. A vast number of people depend on the countryside, not only as a food and timber producing area, but as part of a balanced way of life. So far, only a very few of these people realise the extent of their dependence. Landowners, because of their involvement, do understand this. The multiple use concept for land appears to us to be obvious. Our very involvement makes us want to conserve as well as to exploit. We have a special position which gives us an opportunity to correct public ignorances about the countryside, and a special responsibility to do so., not only for today but also for the future. Conservationists are saying that Man will destroy himself unless he stops thinking that he owns his environment and comes to realise that he is in fact only one part of it. In getting this across to the public, the landowner is their strongest ally, because he understands it better than most, and it is very much in his interests that everyone else should do so too.

Our differences, in fact are short term and minor compared with our common objectives. The desirable working partnership to which I referred depends on closer contact and better understanding of each others problems; the quicker we can achieve this, the better for the countryside, for ourselves, and for the whole population of this country.

THE WORK
OF THE
KENT TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION.

by

Hector M. Wilks B.Sc. (Est. Man.)

Chairman

The Kent Trust for Nature Conservation is one of the County Trusts that have been mentioned in the paper by Mr. Cadbury. The Kent Trust is technically a company, limited by guarantee; it is a registered charity and recently the permission of the Board of Trade was obtained to omit the word "limited" from its title. It manages something under 4,000 acres of land; it has a membership of about 2,500; there is a population of over a million people in Kent to be "indocrinated" with the idea of conservation and we have about £2,500 per annum to do it with.

What we lack in financial resources, we make up with enthusiasm. Fortunately amongst our members we have some very highly qualified scientists in all the natural history subjects and these experts, speaking together, are able to guide and control our activities along scientific lines. We are also fortunate in having one or two people of administrative and business acumen on our Council who bring their particular skills to bear on the organisation and administration of the Trust.

Nevertheless, it can readily be seen that, compared with the size of the task our resources are small. Compared with the population of Kent our membership is insignificant; compared to the acreage of the County, the area of land that we manage or control is tiny.

Nevertheless, I believe that we have already made a considerable impact on public thought in the County and with the help of the people who are reading this paper, I firmly believe we will make a bigger impact yet.

Essentially, the job of the Kent Trust is to preach and practise conservation. What is Conservation? There are many definitions, but I like to think that it is the proper use of resources in the best interests of everybody and in particular the best interests of posterity. Our countryside is not ours to do with as we will but as the late King George VI said "we hold it in trust for future generations". There is no point in trying to allocate blame to any persons, era or social doctrine of the past. Years ago, people wanted coal to keep warm, to heat the boilers, to feed the factories. The fact that this led to slag heaps at that time caused no offence. In the more leisured times now we feel that something "ought to be done about it". All sorts of things, both good and bad have happened in the name of progress in the last two or three decades. It is of no value to blame people who were responsible for what happened then. It is rather our responsibility now to see clearly the situation as it is, and to guide thought and action for the present and future for the protection of the environment in this country, and as far as we are concerned, in this County, and to hand it on to our children and grandchildren in a state of which we should be proud and they pleased to receive it.

We preach the broad issues of conservation and we practise certain specialised aspects of it by example.

We try to make the general public more aware of the need for conservation by some form of participation and this can take so many forms. Some of these I will be discussing in this paper but we have got to go out amongst people, find our audiences, tell them what conservation is, explain to them the urgent need for the conservation of the natural resources of the country and then guide them into the practice of the principles so that it becomes the accepted and responsible habit.

Then we practise conservation in certain specialist activities. In this county of ours we have a wide variety of physical situations, or, shall I say, habitats. We have the coastal marshes and saltings. We have clay cliffs; we have the chalk uplands; we have the high and the low weald; we have some small areas of heath and fen; we have the mixed deciduous woodlands; we have the open farmland with its hedgerows shelter belts and small areas of waste. All these habitats support different forms of animal life and each is a recognised group, a miniature world of its own, but of course all these little worlds are banded together in a bigger one and each can be affected by what goes on outside. Nevertheless, by careful management, some of these areas can be maintained and in turn they can maintain the whole eco-system that is, the whole spectrum of life which it has supported for many, many years. We can preserve some of the open downland as open downland, with all the flowers, birds and butterflies that that supports. We can maintain areas of salting and saltmarsh and the abundant life that that supports.

But all this involves positive work and positive management, With the possible exception of the coast, if any area of land in Kent is left undisturbed, a fence is put round it to keep people and animals out, before very long it will revert to a natural climax of forest. Substantially the whole of our landscape is man-made over maybe thousands of years and scores of generations. To preserve the natural flora and fauna which are now dependant on these land types, actual management techniques are required. Thus, as will be seen from the exhibition material outside this room, we do manage a number of areas of land, some of which as a Trust we own, some of which we lease and as to some over which we have management agreements and arrangements.

We, in common, I hope, with all responsible landowners, are conscious of how much the average person depends on the countryside and how little he realises it. This is really what we are trying to develop; the average person's realisation of his own interest and his own responsibility and the Trust should be everyman's agent. How have we gone about this, not in theory but in fact?

Firstly we are not a field club or a natural history society; this is not our purpose. There are other organisations which are. We are essentially a conservation body and amongst other things of course we provide areas of land on which the natural history organisations can carry out their particular functions.

As a matter of history, our Scientific Committee produced a schedule of land types in the County and a list of what we thought were the most important areas of scientific value and scenic beauty in the county; then to the best of our ability, we started to acquire control over them. Manifestly, this was a highly ambitious scheme and one as to which we were bound to fail, but what we were able to do was to set out the types of habitat which seem to be important and we were able to schedule alternative areas which would cover the principal interests and requirements. As any of these areas became available to us, so we took the opportunity to acquire some form of control. Having got the ownership or management control of the land then we were able to start on our practical programmes and to use these areas of land for illustrative and educational purposes.

The Management of land so as to preserve habitats is a new science. We are learning it. Other county trusts- and the Nature Conservancy- are learning it too. Together substantial progress is being made. The basic principles of conservation, and the need for it, are, however, not as well known as ought to be; the need to maintain an environment for us all, all forms of life, to lead fruitful and purposeful life, is apparent. Thus we started on the road to general participation ourselves - three fields- education, town and county planning and management of land. It is these three aspects which I would now like to deal with in detail.

Education and Publicity

One ordinarily thinks of education starting in schools and this is probably a fair place to start consideration of this aspect of our work. We are constantly in touch with Head Teachers and therefore with schools. Various members of the Council and others give talks, illustrated talks, to school children in school hours. This provides us with a captive audience but normally a very keenly critical audience and it is quite an experience to get involved in this way with 14, 15 or 16 year old children on the subject of conservation and wildlife generally and to illustrate the talk with possibly some eye-catching slides of what can be seen in and around the countryside. We talk to natural history and field clubs in schools, out of school hours and we take these clubs round our reserves to show them what we are doing and to explain in the field exactly what is going on. We show them the whole cycle of nature, the whole cycle of life in the open air; we set them thinking as to the problems of management of the areas; we ask them to consider what would be the effect of, for example, the total extinction of ants, of insects, of fungi and so on; we ask them to look very closely; to turn over the stones and see what there is by way of wildlife underneath. This is just as important as looking at badgers, foxes, trees and the larger elements in the field. We try to make them experience the realisation that nature is an immensely complex and complicated chain of ever-busy activity.

Then we get the schools to participate. Mr. Bland, the Chief Inspector of schools of the Kent Education Committee, has already given a paper on this subject, but I must comment on the way in which the Education Committee and all its officers have co-operated with us in getting school children to participate at all levels, of muscle and brain in conservation work. At Hunstead Wood, for example, there is opportunity for every grade of school child, from those who would dig ditches, clear scrub, cut trees, to those who would make a survey of the wood, a geographical survey, or a geological survey, to those who would test the chemical constitution of the soil at the surface and the various depths; to those who are interested in the flow of water, the formation of the bog, the type of bog, of what goes on by the way of life in the bog; to the checking of the regeneration as areas of scrub are cleared, and so on. There is room for nearly every school child, whatever his interests, to take some active part in positive research and conservation activities, and to get involved.

We have found that with school children the use of nature trails whether formal or informal is extremely valuable. We take children on a nature trail, or we take children round our reserves and it is heartening to find that at the following weekends those same children will come back and bring their parents with them to show what they have been taught and seen during the week. In this way, it is literally true that the children educate the parents.

Then we also co-operate with Colleges of Further Education of all sorts and types. I personally, because of my own personal contact would mention the Christchurch College at Canterbury, where, for some years now, every spring we have given two or three days to a small group of these students both indoors and out of doors. Indoors we explain the whole set of statutory and voluntary bodies; we run very briefly through the law of planning and its impact on conservation; we explain how the mosaic fits together. We take them in the field to show them the problems; problems of mixed use of land; the public want to have picnics; the public want to walk about in the open air in the country, very often on the same parcel of land as that on which the botanist wants to study plants, and the ornithologists wants to study birds and the entomologist wants to study insects. It may also be the same area of land that the local people want to use for their recreational area. How can all these things be married together? for they must be married together. Certain areas can be set aside for one use; other areas for other uses and some areas for multiple uses. This is the kind of problem that we like to put to students and argue the preferred solutions.

Then adults; We give public talks in public halls throughout the county. We try and make these attractive and usually we talk to capacity audiences. We show films and slides and we talk about the county, we talk about the countryside and we try to explain to people what their responsibilities are but without I hope dictating to them. We call upon their interest and we try to encourage a proper understanding of what is going on. Then we talk by invitation to a mass of private clubs and societies, horticultural societies, photographic clubs, natural history societies, Womens Institutes, Business and Professional Womens' Clubs, Rotary and so on. Over and above this, we have for some years now maintained a tent at the Kent Show. This we feel is a valuable way of approaching the general public.

What can the local authority do to help in this aspect? They can maintain and manage certain areas as small nature reserves- the disused railway line; odd fringe areas of publicly owned land on the edges of urban areas; even to include in a formal park on a small section as a "wild Garden", with trees, natural ground flora, cunningly concealed nest boxes for birds and the like. The small "educational Reserve" run in co-operation with local schools can be a real asset to the community.

Town and Country Planning.

I must refer my readers first to the excellent paper by Mr. Clarke the Town Planning Officer for the county. He, and indeed the related paper by Dr. Bryn Green, sets out the formal position relating to the town planning aspects of conservation.

I would, however like to underline one much forgotten section of an Act which has not made very impact and which should, and that is Section 11 of the Countryside Act 1968. It is quite a short section and worth quoting in full.

"11. In the exercise of their functions relating to land under any

enactment every Minister, government department and public body shall have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside",

and as to interpretation:

" 49 (4) References in this Act to the conservation of the natural beauty of an area shall be construed as including references to the conservation of its flora, fauna and geological and physio graphical features.

Some cynics have called sec.11. a "pious hope" In my view it is mandatory on all local authorities. I was brought up to believe that every word in every Act of Parliament was intended by Parliament to be purposeful.

It is now being seen for the first time that western civilisation is waking up to the appreciation of the fact that town and country planning in its deepest and most fundamental sense is really a matter for the geographer - ecologist. A new generation of planner, is, I believe, coming along based on this fundamental appreciation of what it is all about. This is the need on a national level where all the basic decisions have to be taken.

The recent Reith lectures on the B.B.C. were excellent in this context. If you haven't studied these talks by Fraser -Darling, please buy them and read them.

Of course at the local regional level there is and will always be a substantial demand for the architect or surveyor town planner but the basic decisions should in the future be taken by the geographer-ecologist.

Already a number of the national interests are awakening to the need of conservation. Both Mr. Clarke and Dr. Greene have mentioned this. I only need mention just to refresh the memory such things as sites of special scientific interest, local nature reserves and national nature reserves and the consultative procedure in regard to planning applications for development.

It is however in this context that the Nature Conservancy and the Kent County Council Planning Department both come to us for opinions and advice on various scientific aspects of land which is to be developed, or as to which there are proposals for development. We welcome this. It makes a lot of hard work for us but it is hard work which we willingly and eagerly do, because it is in this sphere of activity that we feel that we have a very real role to play.

Having given certain advice, it may well be that, following our advice, the proposed development may be refused and then the applicant appeals to the Minister and as a result of this there is a Public Enquiry.

Frequently then the Local Authority involved, or the Local Planning Authority, will get in ^{back} with us and say that as we provided some or all of the opinion on which the application was turned down, would we please supply a witness or witnesses for the Public Enquiry in support of what we have said. This we very readily do. Over and above this, however, at such an Enquiry, we would almost certainly be present ourselves in our own right, so as to make quite sure that all the scientific and amenity aspects of the problem are put before the Minister's Inspector and also to throw our own weight as an organisation behind that of the Planning Authority.

Over and above this, we also appear as an interested third party in a number of planning Enquiries where we have not been consulted prior by the County Planners. We do this where we feel that there is a need to press for the appreciations of the scientific and amenity aspects of certain propositions. Usually in these cases, we are pleading the same basic case as the Authority, although we are doing it as an independent third party. Sometimes we are pleading a case very similar to the Local Authority, but possibly not quite the same and very rarely indeed is there any form of direct opposition to the Local Planning Authority. Indeed, I cannot recall a single instance of direct conflict.

Under the general subject of Town Planning, we put in a reasoned criticism of the plan for the Ashford expansion. I refer not the original modest expansion scheme but to the Buchanan Report on Ashford which concerned the making of a city region. Frankly, we criticised this very heavily for, as we saw it, the Report was essentially an exercise concerned with the capacity of the area to service urban development. It did not seem to us to be an evaluation of the needs of the Countryside, the ability of this bit of countryside to absorb a new

town, nor was there any comment on the overall desirability of putting a new town in this area.

We heavily opposed the plan to extract water from the underground water bearing strata feeding fresh chalk water to the River Stour. It may not be generally known that the Great Stour is the last surviving chalk stream in the whole of the south east. All the others have been ruined, from a scientific point of view, and although doubtless perfectly healthy there is so much pollution of one sort or another that they have lost the chalk stream characteristics. The Great Stour is already suffering very greatly primarily because of the technically acceptable effluent from the Ashford sewage works. Effluent of this character may be harmless to man; indeed it would probably be of potable standards, yet it is wholly unacceptable to the conservationist in a chalk stream. Sewage effluent contains a very substantial amount of dissolved salts, mostly nitrates and nitrites and these have the effect of "killing" the balance of nature in a pure chalk stream. The trout will go. The rich and varied flora in and alongside the stream will dramatically change; the water itself will become cloudy green with what is known colloquially as flannel-weed; this is a form of green algae growth which thrives in these conditions. The bottom of the stream will change in character. It is not difficult for a botanist or an ecologist to see when a chalk stream has become polluted by substantial proportions of purified domestic sewage. The concentration of sewage can be altered in two ways, either by putting in more sewage which in the case of the Stour was not proposed or by taking out the pure water before it gets to the Stour and this was what was proposed.

As a result of various pressures applied at the Public Enquiry, the Water Board was required to go back and do some further researches into various aspects of the matter and to go back to the Minister again.

We have been opposed and still are opposed to the plans for discharging mine water into the tidal reaches of the Stour, we have opposed a number of propositions to "develop" certain areas along the Swale; we opposed, on scientific grounds, the establishment of the Hoverport in Pegwell Bay and pleaded that it should instead be sited at Dover- where substantially another Hoverport has been successfully operated.

All these things we do on carefully reasoned scientific grounds. It is therefore all the more galling on occasions to have our objections airily described as coming from "The Nature-Lovers".

I feel very strongly that people do not pay proper attention to the provision of open space and recreational areas and nature reserves. I believe Dr. Green has mentioned the shortage of big areas of public open space in the county of Kent. I would like to see some substantial money put aside into a full research programme on the value to human endeavour of the preservation of nature in the countryside. Putting it at its crudest, I wonder how many mental breakdowns have been prevented by people being able to "get away from it all". What is the cost of mental breakdowns? What is the cost of being able to get away from it all? Most people at some time or another want a little bit of peace and quiet. Christ went into the mountains to meditate. A lot of people today want to do the same thing.

Most people in this country have been disturbed to be told, for example of substantial deposits of D.D.T. in the body fat of penguins; they were much more concerned with that than they were at the accidental escape of fluoracetamide into Kentish fields. I personally have been attacked by representatives of a chemical company for exposing the unauthorised practice of tipping substantial quantities of herbicide direct into a flowing water course. Yet where ought the blame to lie?

If the recently designated area of outstanding natural beauty on the north downs is to mean anything, something must be done about it. It isn't simply an area to be shown in a particular colour on a map. It is a meaningful designation and it is up to all of us to make sure that it fulfills its proper role as an area of outstanding natural beauty, that it will remain so and that the responsible public can have reasonable access to get into the country and see what it is like, and that future development in it shall be severely limited.

I have referred already to the exercise at Hunstead Wood with the Kent Education Committee. Surely we have the resources to provide the places and we have the advice to give. The Local Authorities and the schools must give some positive and practical impetus to the

continuity of an exercise like this. At the moment we have it, but this sort of thing must grow.

There is another outstanding example of what can be done at Hothfield. You have had a paper from Major Palmer on the way in which this has been organised as a local nature reserve and how this area is now playing its part in multiple use.

What can the local authority do in relation to this aspect? They can firstly use their powers as to Tree and Wood Preservation Orders; they can watch all applications for permission to develop under-developed land. They must pray in aid their duties under Sec. 11. of the Countryside Act. They can watch their area and co-operate fully with responsible amenity societies.

Land Management.

I suppose essentially it is true to say that we are judged primarily by the land management of those areas of land which we own. It is not so easy to be criticised for the management that we do on areas we lease or areas where we merely have advisory status, under some form of management agreement.

Essentially, the objects of land management by a conservationist is to use his best endeavours to perpetuate the habitat form that is there at the time he takes it over and to preserve it thus for all time. Virtually all our landscape is man-made and therefore to keep the land in the state in which we find it requires extensive management.

The short downland turf will not remain unless it is perpetually grazed or cut. This has been done over the generations by sheep and by rabbits. Now that open sheep-running is no longer profitable and now that myxomatosis has decimated the rabbit population, much of the open down is reverting to scrub and may soon revert to woodland and forest. In these areas, therefore, we have got somehow to maintain an imitation grazing; we have got to keep down the scrub by perpetually cutting it off; we have got to cut the grass and take it away because a lot of dead hay forms a mat on the top of the ground.

Other areas we may be able to keep grazed by nearby farmers, who will put herds of sheep or cattle at our request onto the land and keep it down. In other areas we have got to clear, maintain, drainage ditches to retain the status quo. In other areas we may be trying to do the exact opposite; namely to attract and retain the water to wetland areas such as bogs, fens and water meadows.

Some of the most exciting conservation measures are, naturally, those taken to preserve the very rare species. On the other hand, it must not be thought that the object of conservation is to preserve rare species. This is merely one result of the work. Essentially we do our best to preserve specimens of the various types of habitat throughout the Country. We are not necessarily providing areas of land simply for the specialists to go and look at.

Coincidentally, of course, we are providing areas of land for the ornithologist to go and study birds, for the entomologist to go and study insects, for the botanist to go and study flowers and so on, but this is coincidental. We take the view, almost, that the natural history is more important than the natural historian. What we are doing is preserving these diverse habitats so as to preserve the many species of life in it.

Peter Scott has said on many occasions that a very substantial number of species of animals are becoming extinct in the world every year. We want to play our part in seeing that the balance of nature is maintained.

What can the local authority do in this connection?

I have referred already to educational reserves; this is important. I have referred to Sec. 11. of the Countryside Act. Dr. Green, Mr. Clarke and Mr. Bland have shown their aspects of the case. A local authority can carry out, or sponsor tree surveys of their areas- so as to ensure that worthwhile specimens are preserved. Still more importantly they can sponsor and encourage an awareness in land owners and others of the need to manage marginal areas and rough woodlands as habitats for wild life. They can manage some of the areas, they own as miniature reserves for wild life. They can, above all, disseminate the doctrine that Man survives by working with "nature" and not by destroying it.

I have referred already to the Reith lectures a few months ago by Fraser Darling, he takes the view very strongly that Man, biologically is merely another animal and Man requires all the other species of plant and animal round about him on this earth in order to provide the necessary pyramid on which he is supported. The whole pyramid must be preserved. We simply do not know what would happen if migrating birds failed to migrate, we do not know what would happen if substantial numbers of species of insect, bird or animal were exterminated in a comparatively short time, but one can well see that the results could be catastrophic even to Man himself. Man has been trying for a very long time to control his environment and indeed he can control it to a very substantial degree but he must take care that in trying to control it, he does not destroy it, and himself, at the same time.

We are doing our part, we hope, to see that the environment is retained. If hard-headed business organisations such as the Carnegie Fund, Pilgrim Trust, Gulbonkian Trust, World Wildlife Fund, give us money, as they do, surely there must be something in it? There must be something more than merely the whim of a few long haired scientists.

I take the view very strongly that this is really the very nub of life itself and that the work of a county naturalists' trust, whether it be in Kent or Northumberland, should have the support of any and every responsible authority, organisation and person within its area.

Sandgate gets promise

COUNCIL 'WILL PROTECT ITS CHARACTER'

AN assurance that Folkestone Town Council aims to preserve the character of Sandgate was given on Friday by Alderman Wilfred Lawrence, chairman of the town planning committee.

He told residents at an open meeting at Chichester Hall:

"The best parts of Sandgate will be conserved, and the new will be designed to blend with the old to keep its character as much as possible."

The council's overall plan for the area was to inject more life into it without destroying the best of the old village.

It would be a difficult job, said the alderman.

QUICKLY

At present it was being held up for the development of the Kent Hotel site.

Once that development was started — a housing association hoped to build 40 to 45 flats there — the council would try and press forward as quickly as possible, he said.

Residents had been invited to attend the open meeting by the Lower Sandgate Conservatives.

It was informal and was to give Sandgate's councillors an opportunity to keep in touch with the views of the residents, explained Councillor John Cook.

One resident, who had lived in Sandgate for 17 years, said the area had declined in that time with the council doing nothing to prevent it.

Councillor John Banfield said that in his nine years as a council member over £200,000 had been spent by the council on Sandgate.

HELD UP

This money was spent on such things as a sewerage system, public conveniences, the new Military Road pathway, recreation ground and bowls pavilion, and Encombe investigations.

The development of the Kent Hotel site, and the possibility of a service road being built to it, interested several people.

Alderman Lawrence explained that the development had been held up while negotiations took place with the district valuer.

Puddles in Sandgate High Street were the subject of complaints.

A woman said it was

impossible to walk along the street in the rain without getting splashed.

She wanted to know when the road was going to be repaired.

Some of the holes were five inches deep, she said.

Councillor Cook agreed that the road was in a bad state of repair.

But it was a trunk road and not the local council's responsibility.

However, the borough engineer, Mr. Trevor Greening, was pressing the appropriate Ministry for action, he said.

The road was carrying much more traffic than it was designed for.

There was a long-term plan to link the A259 with the A20 to enable through-traffic to by-pass Hythe and Sandgate.

SIGNPOSTS

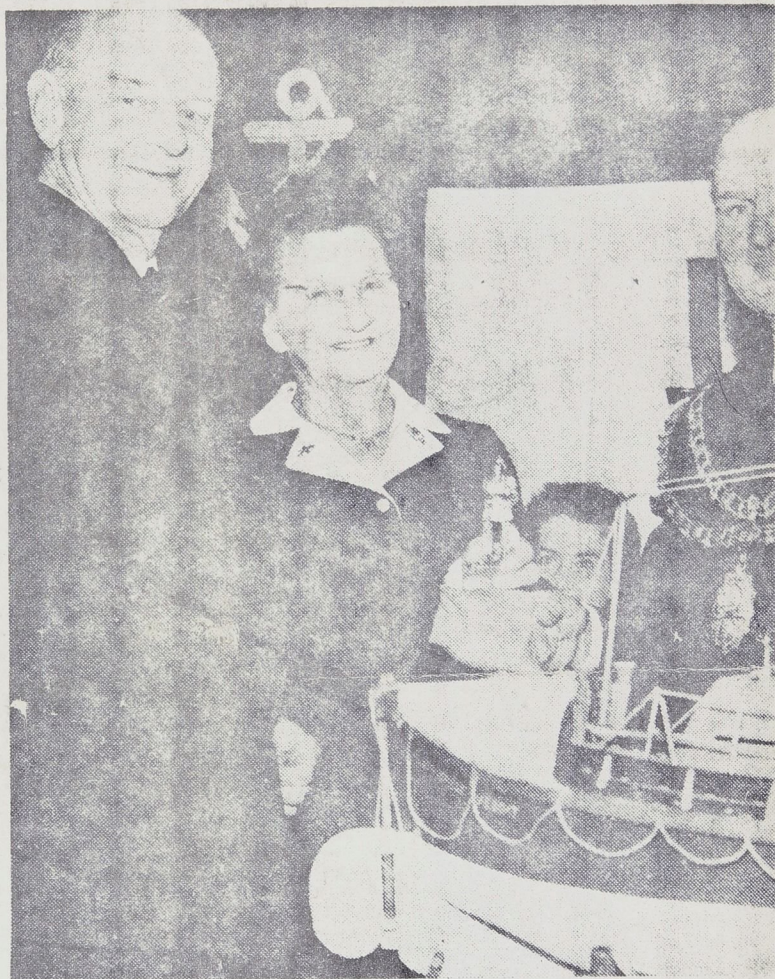
At this stage it was a mere suggestion, he stressed.

Another complaint was that Sandgate was not signposted.

One man said friends visiting him drove along the A259 until they saw a sign welcoming them to Folkestone.

"They thought they must have driven straight through Sandgate — so they turned round and went back to Hythe," he said.

Councillor Banfield said he had been fighting for a nameplate to be put up at the entrance to Sandgate for a long time, but had been unable to convince the council that it was necessary.



STAFF PROBLEMS HIT CATERING DEPARTMENT

CATERING at this year's Folkestone Horse Show will not be done by Folkestone Corporation because of staff problems.

Entertainments and catering manager, Mr. John Bullcock, has told the council that if the catering was carried out it would mean closing parts of one or more of the corporation's catering establishments.

Alderman David Brown, chairman of the entertainments committee, told the council on Wednesday that it would probably have meant shutting the Sunny Sands restaurant and part of the Leas Cliff Hall.

Councillor George Neame thought it more important to have these facilities available to holidaymakers and residents who might need them.

Mr. and Mrs. Maddox are presenting statuettes by the Lydd, Alderman Whiting, in recognition of their fund-raising for the Royal Lifeboat Institution couple live in Road, Little

Bobby

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