

**Biggin Hill & District
Residents Association**

Secretary

Mrs Linda Kemp
35, Norheads Lane,
Biggin Hill, Kent.
Tel: 01959 572875

Chairman

Mr David R. Haslam
114B, Sunningvale Avenue
Biggin Hill, Kent, TN16 3TT
Tel: 01959 572299

Dear Cllr Gostt,

Ref: Mr Ron Pickford
- Secretary of Biggin Hill Residents Association
1965 - 2000

We the undersigned, being Committee Members of the Biggin Hill & District Residents Association, wish to be associated with the tribute and recommendation prepared by our Chairman David R. Haslam, a copy of which is attached.

It is our unanimous wish that Mr Ron Pickford's unstinting and loyal service to both the Residents Association and the wider Biggin Hill community for a period in excess of 40 years, should be given some form of Civic recognition by the London Borough of Bromley.

It is our understanding that each year a select few, from across the Borough are accorded this civic recognition by the Mayor. We would earnestly request that Mr Ron Pickford be considered on this occasion, as this is likely to be the last occasion whilst Mr Pickford is still a resident of Biggin Hill. He is in the process of selling his bungalow to move nearer to his sister in Hampshire.

Signed on behalf of the Committee
Of
Biggin Hill & District Residents Association.

President -

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

Members of Committee

D.R. Haslam
114b Sunningvale Avenue,
Biggin Hill, Westerham,
Kent, TN16 3TT.

Tel: 01959 572299

Date: 3rd January 2001

Dear Cllr Geoff Gostt,

Ref: Mr Ron Pickford
- Secretary of Biggin Hill Residents Association
1965 - 2000

Further to your recent request for information about Ron Pickford's service to the Biggin Hill community, I have compiled the following. As you are aware Ron's service to the Biggin Hill and District Residents Association extends back over more than 40 years, whilst his service as Secretary covers an unbroken 35 years.

Before retirement, Ron was the Quantity Surveyor to one of Croydon's Building Contractors, a roll where I was to meet him in a professional capacity when his Company was asked to tender for a Job where I was the project architect.

When my wife and I first arrived in Biggin Hill in 1971-72. we were approached to see if we would join the Biggin Hill & District Residents Association. Being new to the area, I decided that this would be a good way to find out more about the issues that concerned Biggin Hill.

The first meeting that I attended would have been early in 1972, There was Mr Ron Pickford seated at the table alongside the then chairman, who I believe was another Ron, Ron McCairn. In the insuring years other chairmen were to come and go, but always there, keeping the record of our meetings, sifting through new planning applications, dealing with most of the correspondence, was our ever-faithful Secretary Mr Pickford.

It quickly became evident that Ron Pickford was also a font of knolage regarding the Biggin Hill area. For in the records that he had created, meeting by meeting, was the story of the other Biggin Hill i.e. the Community rather than the famous RAF Station.

Ron's wealth of information about Biggin Hill and District has for many years enabled him to write a Biggin Hill column in the Sevenoaks Times News Papers. Regular as clockwork Ron's column has appeared giving insights into the many people and organisations that make-up the community of Biggin Hill.

Ron Pickford must have been considered one of the Village's Elder Citizens, from before I knew him, this I was to discover when as Biggin Hill's Councillors, Dave Hanscomb and I, became involved in the Council's provision of the Memorial Library. The land chosen for the building of the new Library was a site already owned by the community, a Plot on the corner of Main Road and Church Road.

It transpired that following the 1939-45 World War, the then community had collected money to purchase a Plot and erect a community Memorial Hall on the land, a timber framed Hall was erected and was briefly used, but was subsequently burnt down.

The Community, at that time, was unable to consider rebuilding the Hall and the decision was taken to vest the land in the names of three trustees who would stand as representatives for the community, The chosen Trustees were Gilbert Smith (one time Chairman of Orpington District Council and editor of The Biggin Hill News), Jim Huckle the then Headteacher of Biggin Hill Primary School) and Ron Pickford for the Residents Association.

The Council found itself dealing with these three Trustees when the decision was taken to site the proposed Biggin Hill Branch Library on the old Community Hall Site, Following lengthy negotiations, I believe the land was subject to compulsory purchase for a nominal sum, possibly 1p.

Out of respect to the original intention of providing a Community Hall, as a memorial to the fallen of the Second World War. Dave Hanscomb and I insisted that the new Library should be capable of use for Community Meetings and that it should be known as the Biggin Hill Memorial Library.

Throughout the sixteen years that I served as Councillor, first with Dave Hanscomb and then with Ron Edgington, Ron Pickford was always ready with information which was to prove helpful with many projects, such things as obtaining the Jug's Hill Fitness trail on land that was the subject of a purchase notice following the refusal of planning permission for a large housing development, once again Ron Pickford knew the history and was able to help us.

Together with the Residents Association we were able to achieve many improvements for our community, not least of which was obtaining a bus service which extended down into Biggin Hill valley.

It would be a big mistake to simply look on Ron Pickford as the long serving Secretary of the Residents Association, What is nearer to the truth is that as successive chairmen came and went, Ron had to take on more and more of the Chairman's function as well, if the association was to continue. As the first new chairman, in 35 years, not to be ably supported by Ron Pickford, I am beginning to understand just how deep his commitment to Biggin Hill has been.

I most sincerely support your efforts to gain some form of Civic recognition for Ron Pickford, now that the failing health of his wife, Carmen, has lead to him considering moving away from the area he has served so well for so many years. I believe that it would be a sad omission if such devoted voluntary service to his community was to pass unmarked after 40 years.

Yours faithfully,

David R Haslam
Chairman of
Biggin Hill & District Residents Association