



### **George Bramall B.A. (Hons. Arch) Churchill Fellow**

In August of 2005 CPRE lost one of its most devoted workers and staunch supporter of its policies, George Bramall.

George came to Cheshire from Guernsey, where he had lived for some years, and very quickly joined CPRE in 1996. He became involved in Chester District affairs, becoming a Committee member and eventually a member of the Cheshire Transport Campaign Group.

He served on many Enquiries, becoming particularly involved in many issues related to the A5/A483 extension.

His other local interest was the re-opening of Beeston Station, for which he worked tirelessly up to his sad death.

He campaigned vociferously on CPRE's Quiet Lanes project and was very disappointed that Peckforton Hills did not become the pilot area.

Outside CPRE, he was a driving force behind the Burwardsley Village Design and Parish Landscape Statement, an innovative project to assess and protect the unique environment of the village he lived in and loved.

George was a conscientious and kindly man with great vision. He will be greatly missed by his colleagues in Chester District and the many other Cheshire organisations to which he belonged.

*Alan Wood*



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England

CHESHIRE

**CHESTER DISTRICT**

*Spring 2006*



### From your committee

Over the 12 months since Chester District produced its last Newsletter there have been a number of important developments. Some of these are:

- **Chester Green Belt** – CPRE Cheshire Branch secured Lottery funding for a mailing to selected postal codes around Chester. This highlighted threats to the Green Belt and asked residents to express their views about protecting it. A copy of the mailing is included with this Newsletter.

We hope you feel as encouraged as your Committee does by this, and a number of new members have signed up as a result. A warm welcome to you. Please feel free to get in touch especially if you would like to use your skills to help in our work.

- **The West Cheshire-North East Wales Strategy** – This threatens to overturn the current policy of limiting

growth in the Chester district, to promote regeneration in urban areas, with a damaging expansion plan for our area.

- **Waste** – This is becoming a major issue for Cheshire. The life of the Gowy Landfill Site is to be extended but landfill will not solve the long-term problems of waste disposal. A debate is already raging on a major proposal on the banks of the Ship Canal at Ince.

The Chester District of CPRE welcomes you to the Annual General meeting, details of which are set out elsewhere in this Newsletter.

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## Annual General Meeting – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006

The 2006 AGM will be held at Guilden Sutton Parish Hall at 7:00pm for 7:30pm.

The formal business of the meeting will be followed by a talk on a famous son of the area, Thomas Brassey.

Our speaker will be Councilor Doug Haynes.

Thomas Brassey rose from modest beginnings to become the greatest of the Victorian railway builders, at one time employing some 75,000 people.

Chester recently celebrated the bicentenary of his birth with a number of events including unveiling a plaque at Chester Railway Station, which Brassey built.

This promises to be an entertaining and inspiring talk about a local man with a remarkable story which deserves to be better known.

## Planning

### **Fundamental changes in the Planning System**

The Government is radically changing the planning system and the changes are now beginning to have their effect on Chester and the rural area.

The current Regional Plan and the recently approved Cheshire Structure Plan are based on strong policies of environmental protection, including the important role of the Green Belt and directing new development into areas in need of regeneration, particularly the urban areas of Merseyside and Manchester.

CPRE took a full part in supporting these policies at both the Regional and Structure Plan Public Examinations.

Unfortunately, the new Regional Plan, which is in draft form appears to be weakening these policies and is proposing the building of 7,500 new houses and more business parks in Chester.

CPRE believes that this would undermine Chester's Green Belt and put pressure on the rural villages.

### **West Cheshire / North East Wales Strategy**

A West Cheshire / North East Wales Strategy has been produced by consultants which identifies Chester, Flintshire, Wrexham, Ellesmere Port and Neston as a sub-region, with Chester as the "major economic driver" and "Attack Brand".

This strategy has been produced to 'inform' the Regional Plan and the new Local Development Documents being produced by Chester City Council.

## Beeston Station

The long and bumpy road towards a re-opened Beeston Station is perhaps just a little less long, and a little less bumpy.



Our little Action Group sorely misses the services of George Bramall, sadly missed by all of us, and Derek Marshall, whose recent illness has meant a – hopefully very temporary – absence and whose full recovery we all look forward to.

This leaves but me of that former triumvirate, but we are fortunate in having the strong and active support of Tiverton Parish Council, and particularly their Chairman, Liz Scott. A meeting was held at her home recently when we had representatives of Cheshire County Council, as well as local activists. We went away with a commitment from them to finance a new survey of the local community, drawing on the facts

shown up from our last survey of some years ago, and building on that.

We have been told for some time that any movement towards a re-opened station would require such a new survey, and they have formally confirmed that they will finance this. They estimate a rough cost of something like £5,000. They are evaluating more accurately these costs and establishing the exact format of such a survey. Hopefully we will have more and better information next time around.

We have been told for years of all the reasons why such a re-opened station is impractical, far too expensive, contrary to national policy and all the other reasons why nothing can and should happen.

Recently we were told of proposals to re-open another station on the Chester-Shrewsbury line, and of the massive increased use by customers of that service. I have a relative who lives in Dalgety Bay, just north of Edinburgh, where they had a redundant station re-opened and within twelve months they needed to enlarge the facilities because the use was so much more than even the activists expected.

We all believe that given a number of years such stations as ours will be opened as national policy, and many people will busily tell us all how progressive their thinking had been. We all want it earlier than that. ALL of us want to be around to see it happen. The rolling stock is there. Two trains, each way, every hour. All we want is an opportunity to use them!

This is a step in the right direction.

*Councillor Doug Haynes*

The consultants have set out in the Strategy that they consider that land for a new Business Park should be identified to the “south west of Chester” and that this may well involve land in the Green Belt. The Strategy suggests a review of Green Belt. CPRE is very concerned that this Sub-Regional Strategy is an attempt to replace the Cheshire Structure Plan, which is to be phased out, with a damaging expansion plan for Chester.

### **West Cheshire College / Handbridge Campus**

A planning application has recently been submitted to build a 136 unit housing development on the 11 acre site which is protected by Green Belt. The sale of the site is to fund the relocation of the College to the Northgate Arena car park site.

Building new houses in the Green Belt is contrary to National and Local Plan Green Belt policy. If planning permission is granted for this intensive housing development on the Green Belt site it would set a very damaging precedent encouraging further challenges to the Green Belt on the edges of the City, particularly in the vulnerable area to the South of the City and Green Belt areas protecting rural villages.

CPRE is objecting strongly to this inappropriate and over-intensive scheme.

### **The Countess of Chester Health Park**

The Council has approved a Development Brief which will open up the Northern part of the Countess land with a second access road off Liverpool Rd. and allow, initially, 200 houses and a 5 acre business park to be built on the land in the Green Belt. So far no planning application has been submitted.

CPRE will continue to object to this serious challenge to Green Belt policy.

### **Ince Marshes Resource Recovery Park**

A planning application has recently been submitted for a 240 acre Waste Disposal Site on the Ince Marshes. CPRE understands that the massive development would include all the different processes required for receiving, storing, sorting, recycling and incineration of waste. This plan is not part of the Draft Cheshire Waste Plan but is in addition to it.



CPRE is very concerned that the proposed development would have a severe impact on the exceptional landscape of the area and the important wildlife habitat of this interesting section of

the Mersey floodplain.

The Ince Marshes is a greenfield site adjoining the former Ince Power Station site which is now being re-developed by Quinn Glass.

To keep the enterprise working continuously and efficiently it is likely that waste would be imported, not only from the North West Region but nationally and even from overseas. Traffic carrying refuse would access the site through Chester roads and lanes, detrimental to highway safety.

The emissions from incineration could be detrimental to surrounding areas and the cumulative effect of emissions are not fully understood, despite improvements in incineration technology. The residue remaining after burning would probably be disposed in Chester’s landfill.

### **Chester Railway Station**

CPRE fully supports the Cheshire County Structure Plan recently adopted policy which has identified as a major transport scheme “A New Transport Interchange at Chester Railway station”.

CPRE strongly supports initiatives which encourage seamless journeys between bus and train, and the re-opening of rural stations such as Beeston to provide an alternative to car travel.

It is very disappointing, therefore, that the City Council has published a prospectus for the two station car parks to be developed as retail / offices, and the forecourt space in front of the station building to remain cramped with no extra space for a bus interchange.

CPRE has asked the City and County Councils to provide a Master Plan in which enough space is made available for the proper functioning of a Transport Interchange for buses, car parking, cycling, taxis, etc. This should be thoroughly considered before selling off parts of the site for unrelated development.



*Ann Jones*

**If you would like more information on any of these items, or would be able to help with our campaigning on Planning matters, please get in touch using any of the contacts listed on the front page. We’d be delighted to hear from you.**