

Residents Associations of Old

When the Association's Secretary Joanne Adamczyk moved away from this area she gave me a box of old papers from previous Residents Associations. This was given to her by Councillor Peter Arnold who in turn had it given to him by a resident who had heard that there was a Residents Association being set up in this area.

I sat down one night and started to wade my way through the papers, I was transported back in time looking at what had gone on the area from the 1950's to the 1980's, much of it was the same issues that we have in this present day, dogs, traffic, roads, trees being cut and pavements being out of place. I decided that I would collate some of the issues that had happened in the past and bring them into the 21st Century.

This is as follows.

On the 22 of July 1955 the Ridgewood Residents Association was formed, in the letter informing the residents it was hoped that there would be one person from each household who would attend. The subscription to join the Ridgewood Residents Association was 3/6. There were representatives from each street who were responsible for delivering newsletters, collecting subscriptions etc.

It was a very lively place to be in the 1950's, there was a Social Activities Group, picnics, whist drives and days out were organised. In September 1957 day trips were organised to Blanchland, Redcar, St Mary's Loch and Bolam Lake. The first three made a loss of £3.10s.5d however the trip to Bolam lake made a profit of 11/ 3.

The trip to St Mary's Loch would have been a very long day out. The bus left the estate at 9.am and the route was via Ponteland, Otterburn, Carter Bar, Hawick, Selkirk, St Mary's Loch, and Moffatt, afternoon tea in Lockerbie, Gretna Green, Brampton, Hexham, and South Gosforth.

The profits from the Whist Drives were used to fund the children's Christmas party in January. However in 1956 there was a rumour circulating that the sum of £5 had been withdrawn from the Associations' funds to promote an ADULTS party and that in effect the Whist Drives were being held in order to repay this sum. After lengthy discussion it was decided that a delegation of three be dispatched to trace the source and that this would enable the matter to be satisfactorily settled. The delegation was to report back to the Committee who would decide what further action – if any – should be taken!

A decorators table and a set of ladders was purchased, these were available for hire at 1/ per day. These were well used in the area.

In May 1957 membership of the Residents Association stood at 62 % of the estate (104 members).

It appears that the Ridgewood Residents Association flourished from 1955 to 1958. In July 1958 at the AGM there were 7 members of the committee and two members of the public attended. It was moved and agreed that three items not be presented due to low attendance.

These were summer programme, election of Committee and Appointment of Auditors.

A notice of motion was passed ***“That the attendance of members at this Annual Meeting i.e., two only plus seven of Committee, indicated complete indifference to past or future affairs of Association; that as work of officials and Committee was voluntary such indifference was insufferable and that therefore THE ASSOCIATION BE DISSOLVED, ITS ASSETS SOLD AND ITS FUNDS DISPERSED TO APPROVED CHARITIES.”***

On September 10 1958 an Extra Ordinary meeting was held where it was discussed that the Ridgewood Residents Association be dissolved, it was agreed that at the closing vote there be no action taken for a period of three months to see if anyone would be willing to carry on with the Residents Association.

It seems that even then there were disgruntled people, one person, stated

“That the Association had been wrongly conceived and run”

“One favoured continuation but could not nominate officials.”

If the Committee had voted against the Residents Association continuation then the funds would have been given to the Chronicle Sunshine Fund.

A letter was received by the Secretary from a resident in Ridgewood Crescent who was all in support for the Residents Association to be carried on however this person did have a few comments to make.

“It was not till later that I realised that I was expected to show an interest in Whist Drives (which I abhor) and outings (which I hate when undertaken by the flock). The letter goes on and states that I am all in favour of the Association continuing without the Social Trimmings.

On the 4th of December 1958 it was recommended that the Ridgewood Residents Association be carried on however under a modified constitution, this was to be run as a Caretaker Committee. This would concentrate on the basic needs of residents i.e. to “safeguard the amenities of the estate. They would still carry on with the hire of the equipment but not be involved in any social activities. A sum of 16/- was handed to the new committee.

It seems that the Ridgewood Residents Association stopped in October 1964 though that is far as the correspondence goes to.

On the 27th of October 1980 at South Gosforth First School Haddricks Mill Residents Association was formed (HMRA) This was evolved from the action group that was formed to oppose Tyne & Wear County Council proposal to route dangerous loads via Jesmond Dene Road, Mathew Bank, Haddricksmill Road and Killingworth Road.

The boundaries of the Haddricks Mill Residents Association stretched from Craghall Dene Road, Balmoral Terrace, Haddricks Mill Road and the whole of the Ridgewood Estate as well.

In the first 2 years that the HMRA was in existence they were very busy with no shortage of organising events and being involved in the community.

In June 1981 a day trip was organised to Edinburgh with Chicken and Chips at the Nags Head in Alwnick, also a disco at the Piccolo on Gosforth High Street was held.

March 1982 saw a barn dance held, a picnic in the quarry playground and a Halloween Party at the Lonsdale in Jesmond. They were involved in the proposed quarry playground that was built as well. In August 1982 they campaigned for a handrail to be installed at the steps on South Gosforth Green, this was put in place in December 1982.

It would appear that the bank account from the Ridgewood Residents Association was amalgamated into the Haddricks Mill Residents Association bank account and was used for the "*Bowey Fighting Fund*"

Over on the Ridgewood Estate they were campaigning against the proposal by Bowey group to place a road haulage, car and van hire depot to be placed in Bowes Street. In 1982 it was decided that there be a sub committee from the Ridgewood Estate to be formed so that they could keep the HMRA Committee informed about the Bowey Situation.

The Haddricks Mill Residents Association joined forces with the Hunters Court Maintenance Company in campaigning against the company proposals. This led to a massive petition of 457 names being presented to Newcastle City Council who in turn rejected the company's plans.

The Bowey group made an appeal to the Department of Environment, a Public Inquiry was held at the Civic Centre on the 28th of October 1982, 103 people attended 87 of which were residents from the estate. A Coach was provided to take residents down to the Civic Centre; this was free and was paid out of the Bowey Fighting Fund. 130 letters of objection were sent to the Department of Environment. It was hardly surprising that with such powerful

public opinion objecting to the Bowey application that the Inspector turned the appeal down.

There were big celebrations at Ridgewood Gardens, the sub committee's Chairman and his wife was presented with some lead crystal fruit bowls as a gesture of thanks from grateful residents during what was called the Bowey Crisis.

At the AGM in November 1982 the Chairman of the HMRA Mr Arthur paid tribute to the Chairman of the sub – committee in all the hard work that they had put in, this resulted in the Bowey appeal being turned down. Also the Chairman of the sub committee was nominated to take over the HMRA but decided against the position.

In January 1983 it was decided to include Lilburn Gardens, Lartington Gardens and part of Freeman Road, the HMRA received a letter from the Benton Park Residents Association stating that this patch was within there area. A very nice letter was issued stating that the HMRA were not wishing to encroach upon there territory therefore these streets would not be leafleted.

In November 1983 the HMRA lent there support to the newly formed Ouseburn Residents Association who were campaigning for the houses at Killingworth Road / Gallalaw Terrace to be improved by Tyne and Wear City Council. This lead to railings being installed on the footpaths.

Lastly in 1984 and 1985 the HMRA lent there support to the Benton Park Residents Association who were campaigning against a proposed Gipsy Camp near Benton Park Road. I do not have the papers as to what the outcome of this was.

This is the end of what went on from 1955 to 1985, there were many other important issues went on but I couldn't include them all. If there is any one who recognises any one mentioned then I hope you or they won't be offended by this report.