

"Our Village" Series

S. N. & S.

CAINSCROSS

9. AUGUST. 57.

*Hub For Traffic *Included In Urban Boundary

*Hospital Carnivals

WHERE once horse-drawn traps and brewers' drays rolled peacefully, now double-decker buses and long-distance lorries roar noisily, belching diesel fumes into the air.

Yes, Cainscross and Ebley have been the "victims" of progress and expansion. From being entirely independent and almost isolated villages they have become part of the busy, bustling town of Stroud—and a vital part.

It was evident that sooner or later Cainscross would become the busy centre that it is—its very situation made that inevitable. Spread around an important cross-roads it has always seen much traffic passing through, even in days when horses and carts were the most advanced form of transport.

But as traffic increased in volume Cainscross became a virtual hub for it, until it reached the stage when traffic lights were needed and then widening of the cross-roads became an absolute necessity.

Both the installation of lights and the widening have been carried out and despite the criticism of the working of the lights, the vast volume of traffic which passes through them daily now moves more freely.

IN 1936

As progress was made and Stroud expanded, so Cainscross and Ebley tended to lose their separate identities. In 1936 the old Cainscross Parish Council was abolished by a County Review Order and the boundaries of the Stroud Urban District were extended to include both Ebley and Cainscross, but not until much wordy warfare had passed and a public enquiry held which was fully reported in the two local papers. The late Mr. J. W. Thompson, of the "Stroud Journal," was the official shorthand writer at the public enquiry which eventually led to the enlargement of Stroud.

The 1936 order was a blow to the independence of the two villages. They had been closely linked for many years and the thought of having their own council taken away did not meet with the approval of everyone. Many still

deplore the change and subsequent developments, particularly in relation to public finance, show that their misgivings were not ill-founded. With the rate in the £ so much smaller in the rural area where similar public services exist, many people wonder if the extensions of the boundaries of Stroud was the altogether unmixed blessing which some of its protagonists claimed.

Yet in the 21 years which have since passed, there has been no doubt about the growth of the prosperity of Cainscross and Ebley—no longer villages but a ward in the new urban area. Particularly noticeable has been the development of garages and repair shops to handle the increasing motor traffic, and shopkeepers have benefited by the vast public and private building programmes at Ebley and Cashes Green.

GOOD WORK

However, this is a point at which to pay tribute to the work of the old Cainscross Parish Council which numbered among its members many men of outstanding ability.

Parish Councils have always been noted for the way in which they have exerted an influence beyond the actual limit of their legal powers. At Cainscross this was admirably illustrated by the great Cainscross Carnivals inaugurated in the 1920's by parishioners and the Council. The idea was to raise funds for Stroud General Hospital, then entirely dependant on voluntary effort, and the very first carnival brought in £800. The following year the total amount donated by Cainscross to the Hospital rose to over £1,000 and this at a time when trade was bad and many out of work.

Thousands flocked to Cainscross for the carnivals and the entries were numerous, ingenious and artistic. They made the "day of the year" and the fact that any profit was for the local hospital helped to ensure success.

To digress for a moment, how many now remember the popular annual church parades arranged by the local lodges of the Stroud

Holloway Original Benefit Society for the hospital? At Cainscross the procession, with the large embroidered banners, assembled at Pagan-hill and marched to the music of a band to St. Matthew's Church where a vast congregation was sure to assemble. To the younger on-lookers nothing was more fascinating than the hollow tubes held up by collectors to those gaining a vantage point from second or third storey windows.

RESIGNED EN BLOC

Older journalists recall that Cainscross Parish Council was a lively one and that there was usually some good copy to be had from its meetings in the C. of E. School. The Council certainly caused a sensation in the early years of this century when they resigned en bloc as a protest at the proposal to build the Cashes Green Isolation Hospital. The passage of time has shown how ill-founded their fears were and now the hospital buildings serve an entirely different purpose as a hospital for old people.

When the Parish Council resigned the County Council stepped in and appointed the late Mr. J. C. C. Kimmins to act in their place until such time as a new Parish Council was formed.

(To be continued)

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