

After 14 years ...

# THE BATTLE OF BRIDGE IS OVER

THE battle of Bridge ended on Tuesday. The barely audible snip of a pair of scissors silenced the deafening roar of juggernauts and brought to an end the traffic nightmare that has plagued villagers for years. Wielded by the Minister of Transport, Dr John Gilbert, the scissors sliced through a length of tape to signal the opening of the long fought for by-pass.

As the whole village breathed a sigh of relief, Dr Gilbert admitted that as he had travelled along the old A2 he was unable to believe the country still had roads like it.

It was not only villagers who welcomed the new road. The drivers of the TIR giants who had to thread their way through the narrow main street were also thankful.

As the opening ceremony reached its climax many in the audience were remembering the lorries that never completed the tortuous trip through the village, but instead embedded themselves in village shops and houses, leaving death and injury in their wake.

All that came to an end shortly after 3 pm, when Dr Gilbert officially opened the new £3¼ million road before an audience of villagers, councillors and contractors.

Bridge Primary School was given the day off for the event and the village was decorated with flags. Drivers entering the High Street were faced with a sign from the A2 Group campaigners: "Bridge's last TIR. You know it makes sense."

One placard said it all. It was tied to the tail of a 32-year-old pony, Dandy, and bore the simple message: "Farewell TIR."

Dandy was taken to the opening by Mrs Angela Bartlett, of Grove Cottage, Bishopsbourne. She said: "When I was five or six, I used

## City by-pass to cost £9 million

Canterbury's by-pass — at a cost of £9½ million — will be more expensive than some motorways, it has been revealed by the Department of the Environment. News of the bill — meaning the road will cost more than £2 million a mile — was given at a three-day exhibition staged by the department to explain the road plans.

The 4.2 mile dual-carriageway road taking traffic away from the city centre was explained with diagrams and maps at the exhibition at the Cooper Centre. Work is expected to start in 1978.

Before the exhibition opened on Friday, a group of about 35 councillors, representing Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council and parish councils, had a private meeting with department officials and engineers who explained the proposals, giving details of the proposed route.

Among visitors on Saturday was Canterbury's MP, Mr David Crouch, who praised the department for staging the exhibition and giving the

public the chance to speak with experts.

"It's a form of open government and joint consultation which I welcome," he said. He also pointed out the department had invited objections and criticisms.

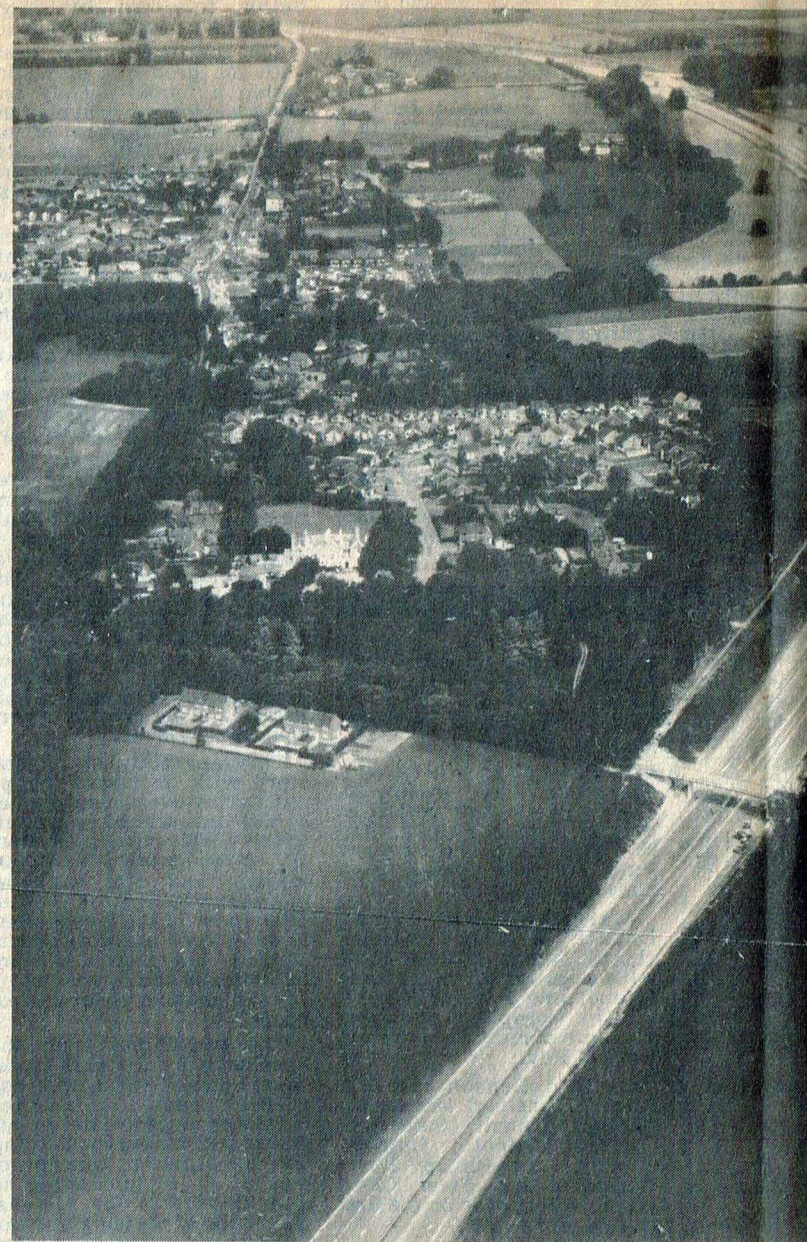
These have to be sent to the department by September 17, or Mr Crouch said, people could tell him and he would take the matter up with the Transport Minister.

He continued: "I think the plan looks a good one. I am thankful they have cut out viaducts and gone for cuttings which will be so much better for our open countryside."

"The by-pass will be a great boon to all of us who want to see Canterbury preserved as one of the greatest historic cities."

Mr Crouch was also pleased that a generous allowance had been made for access to the new road.

"It is a generous by-pass and will cost over £2 million a mile which is higher than the cost of many motorways. Now I hope for full speed ahead and get it built," he added.



A bird's eye view of Bridge's £3¼ million by-pass which opened after a 14-year campaign on Tuesday. The dual carriageway road, completed two months ahead of schedule, will mean a return to the old, peaceful way of life for villagers.



Nineteen-year-old Angela Lewis, who has first-hand experience of the juggernaut terror in Bridge, happy on the by-pass.

## Angela welcomes new road

One of the happiest villagers watching the by-pass opening was 19-year-old Angela Lewis, who has vivid memories of the juggernaut terror.

It was in the early hours of May 26, 1972, that Angela was thrown from her bed as a heavily-laden juggernaut

# Angela welcomes new road

One of the happiest villagers watching the by-pass opening was 19-year-old Angela Lewis, who has vivid memories of the juggernaut terror.

It was in the early hours of May 26, 1972, that Angela was thrown from her bed as a heavily-laden juggernaut ripped through the front of her parents' grocery shop in Bridge High Street.

As dawn broke that morning, the full horror of the accident could be seen. The lorry driver, killed outright, was still trapped in his cab, which in turn was supporting the wrecked front of the building.

In one night, the Lewis family lost their livelihood and their home — victims of the A2 TIR terror.

Ironically, Angela has been working as a secretary at the Kent County Council by-pass site office and after Tuesday's opening, she met the Transport Minister, Dr John Gilbert.

Angela remembered: "It was about 3 am when the lorry came through the house. I was woken up with a bit of a shock." She had bruises and went to hospital and the family lived in temporary accommodation for 2½ years.

They are now back in the shop, which is expected to reopen soon. After leaving school, Angela worked in an insurance office and then saw the County Council job advertised.

With the by-pass complete, she is not sure if she will be transferred to another suitable post.

She said she did not feel nervous when she moved back into the shop. Her room is now being used as a stockroom and she sleeps at the rear of the building. She explained: "We realised it was a one-in-10 chance of the crash happening again. I suppose we were a bit nervous when we went back, but we soon got used to it."

Her reaction to the new road: "It's super."

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Dandy was taken to the opening by Mrs Angela Bartlett, of Grove Cottage, Bishopsbourne. She said: "When I was five or six, I used to ride through Bridge and I have brought Dandy here to celebrate, because now I can let children ride through the village again."

## THE ROAD

Among guests at the ceremony were members of Kent County Council and Canterbury City Council, including the Mayor, Cllr Ian Fowler. Leading campaigners for the road, Mr John Purchase, Mr Brian Lewis and Canterbury's MP, Mr David Crouch, were also there.

The new road has 2¼ miles of dual carriageway and the work also took in 1¼ miles of improvements to the A2.

Dr Gilbert was pleased to share villagers' relief. Opening the by-pass, he said: "I was a little short of incredulous when, on my way here, we came off the dual-carriageway of the A2 and found we still had roads of that quality. I couldn't believe it."

Despite public spending cuts, the Government was still determined to continue developing a road building programme. By 1990, there would be a high standard road system which, with traffic figure expectations, should last into the next century.

"This country depends on roads for transport and road traffic in the wrong place can be a nightmare to live with."

Dr Gilbert said he received letters from businessmen asking him to improve roads and the public also had much to gain from improvements.

The Government also tried to help those who suffered and there were over 130 by-passes in the road programme and other roads with a by-pass

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Part of the happy, relieved crowd of Bridge villagers who watched Tuesday's opening ceremony.

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