

BRIDGE BY-PASS NOTES
AND CUTTINGS.



"FEAR STALKS BRIDGE, NEAR CANTERBURY - THE 20th CENTURY FEAR OF DEATH ON THE ROAD. FOR THE OLD-WORLD HIGH STREET IS A ONE MILE STRETCH OF THE LONDON - DOVER A2." Kent Messenger, January 5th 1962.

PLATE: 213/11
31/3/1962
12.15 pm.

Hurt on road while running errands

EDWARD Smith, 66, a patient at an old folks' hospital, The Close, Bridge, near Canterbury, was seriously injured on Saturday night while running errands for other patients in the main street, which is part of the A2.

While crossing the road, he was in collision with a van driven by Timothy Travers of 13, Rutland Close, Canterbury, and sustained fractures of the both legs and other injuries.

Smith's message pad was picked up from the roadway. He was "attached" to the men's ward, and was allowed to deliver messages and go out shopping for patients.

MAN KILLED AT BRIDGE

Walked Into Van's Path

Driving his Commer van through High Street, Bridge, on the evening of December 30, Timothy T. Travers, of 13 Rutland Close, Canterbury, suddenly saw a man walk into the path of his van. He braked hard but could not avoid hitting him.

The victim was Thomas G. Smith, 66, a resident of The Close, Bridge, for the past nine years. He died in the night at Canterbury Hospital last Wednesday night from, said Dr. G. B. Forbes at the inquest on Friday, shock due to multiple injuries, which included fractures of the pelvis and of both legs.

Smith was well known in Bridge, where he used to go shopping for the other patients. He had no known relatives, and evidence of identification was given by the Superintendent of The Close, Mr. Henry R. Jones, who told the Deputy Canterbury Coroner (Mr. C. B. Croft) that he had, on several occasions, warned deceased of the danger of walking on the road. Smith walked with a shuffle and with his head bent down.

Relating the circumstances of the accident, Mr. Travers said he was driving towards Canterbury at 25-30 m.p.h. and had passed the Union Road turning. A number of cars had just passed towards Dover when his dipped headlights suddenly showed the figure of a man about 8ft. in front. He came over the crown of the road into the path of the van.

A Shuffling Gait

The man was walking with a shuffling gait and seemed to be bent over forwards. All witness could do was to brake hard but he struck the man and, he believed, carried him a few feet before stopping. He found the man lying in the road in front of the car. He immediately phoned for an ambulance and the Police.

Immediately behind the van was broken glass and a shopkeeper said that deceased had just bought a bottle of soft drink. The van was new in April, 1961, and the brakes were perfect.

Witness told Mr. R. Daniels, by whom he was represented, that Smith never looked in his direction and was probably unaware of the van's approach. It was very dark at that spot.

P.C. Bing, who was called to the scene, said that he found deceased lying on the pavement, being attended by Dr. Hunter, whose house the accident had happened. The van had a dent on the top of the bonnet, the number plate was bent back and the nearside wing mirror had been snapped off.

A Statement

Witness took a statement from Mr. Travers and it was virtually the same as his evidence. It was a fine night but had previously been raining. The spot was between two gas street lamps and was very dark and a high wall tended to make it darker. De-

ceased was wearing a brown overcoat. Evidence was given by Dr. G. Verghese, who said that, after admission, deceased was operated upon for his broken legs, and improved next day. After that, however, his condition gradually deteriorated.

The Deputy Coroner expressed the opinion that deceased waited for a passing vehicle from Canterbury to pass and then walked straight across without looking for vehicles from the Dover direction. There was nothing to suggest that he knew of the presence of Mr. Travers' vehicle or that Mr. Travers had any time to avoid him.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

KENTISH GAZETTE 12.1.1962

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Canterbury faces more traffic chaos

Motorway will be ready before by-pass

THE M.2 will speed the flow of traffic between London and the Channel ports — but it will mean unprecedented chaos in the centre of Canterbury.

The 25-mile motorway now under construction from the outskirts of Strood to Brenley Corner, between Faversham and Canterbury, is scheduled for completion by mid-1963.

A by-pass on the A2 has been approved by the Ministry of Transport at Harbledown, Canterbury.

But it is not known when the by-pass project will start. It will be a two-year job, and cannot be completed before 1964 at the earliest.

BUS CHIEF'S FEARS

Fears for the situation in Canterbury when the motorway is finished were expressed this week by the chairman of a company which operates over 600 buses and coaches.

He is Mr. R. P. Bedow, head of the East Kent Road Car Company, who said in his annual report to stockholders:

"Last year I welcomed the

completion of the Maidstone motorway, A20(M) and the commencement of work on the Medway Towns motorway (M2).

The Maidstone motorway is proving a great benefit to traffic moving to and from East Kent and we are looking forward to the completion of the Medway motorway.

"To my mind there is no doubt that the completion of the Medway motorway is going to mean heavy additional traffic on the A2 road between London and Dover.

"Unless the proposed by-pass at Canterbury is ready in the very near future, the added through traffic in the narrow main street, whether it be moving on as more likely, stationary, will divide the life of the city into two separate halves."

Hospital patient who "shuffled" to death

THE gas-lit High Street at Bridge, near Canterbury, where lamps were said to show only pools of light underneath, with dark patches between, was described to the deputy Canterbury coroner (Mr. C. B. Croft) on Friday.

A jury returned a verdict of accidental death on a 66-year-old hospital patient who "shuffled" to his death at an "extremely dark" part of the road.

He was struck by a motor van driven by Timothy T. Travers, of 13, Rutland Close, Canterbury, sustaining fractures of both legs, the pelvis, and head lacerations.

He was knocked down on Saturday evening, December 30th, and died from shock in Kent and Canterbury Hospital four days later.

OUTSIDE DOCTOR'S

Thomas George Smith lived at The Close, an old folks' hospital, in the village. The accident happened when he was doing a good turn for other patients. He was out shopping, and a bottle of mineral water was found shattered beside him in the road.

Henry R. Jones, superintendent of The Close, said that Smith had been a resident for nine years. "He shuffled as he walked, and was inclined to walk in the road.

"I told him not to walk in the road. He usually went shopping for other patients," said Mr. Jones.

Mr. Travers, the only eyewitness of the accident, told the coroner that he was driving through the village at 25-30 m.p.h. towards Canterbury.

"I saw the figure of a man shuffling from my off-side, immediately in front of me.

"I hit him as I braked. He walked into the beam of the head-lights."

Pol. Con. Bing, who went to the scene, said that it happened outside the house of Dr. R. B. Hunter, whom he found attending to Smith.

Summing up the coroner said there was nothing to suggest that Smith knew of the presence of the approaching van, and Mr. Travers did not have time to avoid him.

OLD WORLD VILLAGE WITH RACE-TRACK HIGH ST.

Ministry says: No need for safety measures. One day there'll be a by-pass

FEAR stalks Bridge, near Canterbury—the 20th century fear of death on the road. For the old-world High Street is a one-mile stretch of the London-Dover A.2.

For 20 years villagers have campaigned for special safety measures.

They have seen adults and children killed and once parents formed a human barrier across the road as a protest against fast traffic.

But the authorities have done very little to alleviate the ever-present danger.

To every request for safety measures, the Ministry of Transport replies that Bridge will one day be by-passed, and there would then be no need for special precautions.

APPREHENSION

The 887 people of Bridge are solidly in favour of any move to reduce the danger. "The battle goes on" the Vicar, the Rev. R. A. Penney, told a reporter this week.

"The whole of this village lives in a state of apprehension about their children and old people.

"The lighting is very poor, and the old folk have a very dangerous time.

"In the summer, vehicles on the way to the Continent, and those coming the other way, form a non-stop procession of fast traffic both ways all the time.

NO FOOTPATH

"The local police regulate the traffic at service times and for Sunday school. There is no footpath from the village up that part of the hill which leads to the church", said the Vicar.

"Vehicles have struck the churchyard wall and the cottage next door, and when I asked if we could set the wall



THE REV. R. A. PENNEY,
Vicar of Bridge.



MR. A. TAYLOR, chairman of Bridge Parish Council.

back for a footpath, the Ministry of Transport said that in view of the by-pass it would not be justified.

"The parish council has raised the matter four times, and the Ministry sent down an inspector, who stood in the High Street for half-an-hour when there was an un-hurried flow of traffic. Later, we were told there was no case.

"The pavements are dangerous and narrow, and we have 100 old people at The Close (a hospital). There is not more than 50 yards of pavement in which two people can walk abreast", said the Vicar.

BY-PASS: WHEN?

Mr. A. Taylor, chairman of the parish council, said he did not think the by-pass would come in his lifetime. Formerly, it was planned



MR. J. SMITH, road safety officer.

through nearby Patrinxbourne, but he had since heard it would start from Wincheap Green, Canterbury, along South Canterbury Road and the disused Elham Valley rail way line.

Said Mr. Taylor: "In the summer, cars do 60 and 70 m.p.h. through Bridge (speed is restricted to 30 m.p.h.). We need two road crossings.

"The traffic police allow cars to go too fast—that's what is wrong with the village" said Mr. Taylor.

The headmistress of the village school, Miss O. Seath, told a reporter: "In my opinion, it is very dangerous here because of the great speed of cars going through to Dover. Many don't observe the 30 m.p.h. limit.

NO ZEBRA

"You take your life in your hands in Bridge. There ought to be a pedestrian crossing" said Miss Seath.

Mr. J. Smith, road safety officer for Bridge-Blean Rural Council, who lives in Bridge, said: "We have been trying to get danger signs, traffic lights, a pedestrian crossing, and black-spot signs, but the Ministry will not move.

"We are continually fighting the Ministry and the whole bag of tricks, and we cannot get anywhere. The police patrol day and night".

14.1.1962

The Minister of Transport,
The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation,
Berkeley House, Berkeley Square,
London, W.1

The proposed Bridge By-Pass.

Dear Sir,

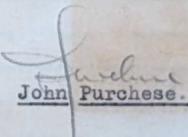
The Village of Bridge lies three miles south east of Canterbury on the main A2 road from London to Dover. With the increase of traffic expected to pass through the village as a result of the Medway Towns By-Pass and the possible entry of Britain into the European Common Market, I am venturing to enquire what the current position is regarding a by-pass round this otherwise quiet little hamlet.

Mr. R.P. Beddow, Head of the East Kent Road Car Company is reported as having recently said: "To my mind there is no doubt that the completion of the Medway Motorway is going to mean heavy additional traffic on the A2 road between London and Dover."

There are particular and difficult hazards for the motorist and the pedestrian at Bridge. I would be pleased to go into detail in another letter, if you, Sir, would pass this letter to the official whose responsibility encompasses this problem, so that I can communicate directly.

I should be grateful for an early reply, since events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,


John Purchese.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telegrams: Transminry, London, Telex
Telephone: WATERloo 7999, ext. 2114

Our reference:
Your reference:

19th January, 1962

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of the Minister to acknowledge your letter of 14th January which is receiving attention.

Yours faithfully,

Carlin — Blak

Assistant Private Secretary

John Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank",
High Street Bridge
Canterbury,
Kent.

M



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telegrams: Transminry, London, Telex
Telephone: WATERloo 7999, ext.

Our reference: HGP 14/42/068
Your reference:

25th January, 1962

Dear Sir,

Proposed Bridge By-Pass

The Minister has asked me to reply to your letter of 14th January about a by-pass of Bridge.

It is proposed to by-pass the village in due course, but I regret that I cannot at present say when this will be done. There are so many even more pressing schemes throughout the country which will absorb all the available funds for the next few years, ~~but~~ it is probable that this scheme will not be carried out for some considerable time.

With regard to the safety aspect you will of course know that the road is speed restricted with 30 m.p.h. speed limit repeater signs provided at both approaches to the village, which should warn drivers they are entering the centre of the village, and that they should take special care. For northbound drivers the 'school' sign should serve as a further warning.

John Purchese, Esq.,
'Rosebank',
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury,
Kent

Yours faithfully,

G. Davis
G. DAVIS

HGP/14/42/068.

Appended notes: 1. 30.1.1962

(Please examine the enclosed small prints of photographs recently taken. These are lettered for identification. Large prints can be made available on request, quoting the identifying letter).

A. The basic problem at Bridge is a psychological one. On either hill the approaching driver clearly sees the opposite hill and the road leading up it. (Arrowed). This invariably persuades the driver to accelerate - to have maximum speed with which to attack the climb.

The M.O.T. 30m.p.h. signs can be seen clearly, but this is at the moment that the opposing hill becomes visible, and the signs are repeatedly ignored. The Police have to maintain hours of patrol on this hill every summer day to slow traffic by their presence.

B. The Church Entrance. Quotation from remarks by the Vicar of Bridge, printed in the Kent Messenger, 5.1.1962.
"...The local police regulate the traffic at service times and for Sunday School. There is no footpath from the village up that part of the hill which leads to the church."
"...Vehicles have struck the churchyard wall and the cottage next door, and when I asked if we could set the wall back for a footpath, the Ministry of Transport said that in view of the by-pass it would not be justified."
"The Parish Council has raised the matter four times and the Ministry sent down an inspector, who stood in the High Street for half-an-hour when there was an un hurried flow of traffic. Later we were told there was no danger."



A.

Photographed: 22.1.1962
12.10 pm.
(208/7).



B.

Photographed:
22.1.1962 12.0 noon.
(208/6).

C. Further quotation by the Vicar in the same paper.
"The pavements are dangerous and narrow... There is not more than fifty yards of pavement in which two people can walk abreast."

At one point, the pavement on one side is 43" wide (by the lorry) and opposite, only 36" wide (ahead of the car being filled with petrol).

D. It is more dangerous at night. You will note that the interior lights of the 'bus light up the street better than the gas street light. This can be seen on the face of the buildings to the left of the 'bus.



C.
Photographed 22.1.1962
11.40 am.
(208/5)



D.
Photographed
22.1.1962
5.15 pm.
(208.14)

E. This is the concealed entrance to Union Road where the old people's hospital is situated. It was recently the scene of a fatal accident. The photograph was taken with a shutter speed of 1/50th. second. Your mathematicians might care to compute the speed of the passing car which has clearly travelled nearly two feet during the exposure.

None of these photographs was posed.

F. Quotation from a report in the Kent Messenger on January 12th., 1962.
"The gas-lit High Street at Bridge, near Canterbury, where lamps were said to show only pools of light underneath, with dark patches between, was described to the deputy Canterbury Coroner... on Friday".

G. The southbound School sign is hidden behind foliage in the summer time, and it was necessary even in January to cross beyond the northbound carriageway to obtain a clear view of the sign.

Facts:

There are ~~are~~ 897 people in Bridge.
There are 90 children attending the Bridge Primary School, 80 yards from the High Street.
There is a hospital and home for elderly men and women 100 yards from the High Street. There are over 100 inmates, many ambulant.
There are nearly 300 old age pensioners, whose pensions are drawn at the village Post Office - in the High Street.

Quotes:

Mr. A. Taylor. (Chairman, the Parish Council).
"I do not think that the by-pass will come in my lifetime."
Miss O. Seath. (Headmistress, Bridge Primary School).
"You take your life in your hands in Bridge."
Mr. J.D. Smith. (Road Safety Officer).
"We are continually fighting the Ministry and the whole bag of tricks, and we cannot get anywhere."



E.

Photographed 22.1.1962.
11.40 am.
(208/4).



F.

Photographed
22.1.1962
5.10 pm.
(208/12)

'ROSEBANK',
HIGH ST., BRIDGE,
CANTERBURY, KENT.

TEL. BRIDGE 485

HGP/14/42/068

30.1.1962

G. Davis, Esq.,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

"Proposed Bridge By-pass".

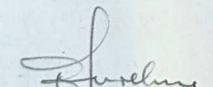
Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated the 25th. of January, 1962, in which you replied on behalf of the Minister to my enquiries regarding the proposed by-pass of Bridge.

I have noted your remarks, but believe that it would help your Department assess the reality of the situation if its attention were drawn to certain aspects of safety on the road through the village. Some notes are appended to this letter. I should be grateful if you would, having read these, reaffirm your Department's satisfaction with the present safeguards which you listed, namely the two sets of 30m.p.h. signs and the northbound school sign.

I should also be most grateful for a direct comment on the remarks made by the Head of the East Kent Road Car Company, quoted in my previous letter (14.1.1962). The danger lies in the future growth of the already heavy traffic, and - as I ended before - events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,



John Purchese.
Chairman: Bridge Primary
School Parent-Teacher Assoc.
Member: St. Peter's Parochial
Church Council.



G. Photographed: 30.1.1962

10.30 am.
(209/4).

FORM REG. 16.

Our reference HGP/14/42/068

Your reference _____

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
ST. CHRISTOPHER HOUSE,
SOUTHWARK STREET,
LONDON, S.E.1.
Date 1st February 1962

The Secretary acknowledges receipt of your letter dated 30th January 1962 with enclosure(s), which is receiving attention.

M753223 888

ASSOCIATED WITH THE BRITISH ELECTRIC TRACTION CO. LTD. AND BRITISH RAILWAYS

EAST KENT

ROAD CAR COMPANY LTD

HEAD OFFICE
STATION ROAD WEST · CANTERBURY · KENT
TELEPHONE 6151-5

OUR REF PWD/GN B.6. YOUR REF

J. Purchase, Esq.,
Rose Bank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Nr. Canterbury.

5th February, 1962.

Dear Sir,

Referring to your recent telephone call to this office, we are interested to learn of your efforts to obtain a by-pass for Bridge.

We are, of course, vitally interested in traffic conditions at all congested places, but we normally make our own representations in such matters and should the occasion arise, will do so in this case.

We should be grateful, however, if you would be good enough to keep us informed on the progress of your campaign.

Yours faithfully,
EAST KENT ROAD CAR CO.LTD.,


(P.W. Dodge)
Traffic Manager

'ROSEBANK',
HIGH ST., BRIDGE,
CANTERBURY, KENT.

TEL: BRIDGE 485

HGP/14/42/068

12.3.1962

G. Davis, Esq.,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

"Proposed Bridge By-Pass".

Dear Sir,

I wrote a detailed letter to you on the above subject on January 30th of this year. This was acknowledged by card from your Department the following day. Six weeks have elapsed from this date and I appear to have received no reply.

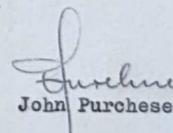
Your answer will be most welcome not only to me but to the number of people who have interested themselves in the correspondence. We are, as you know, waiting to hear your Department's reaffirmation in its satisfaction with the present road safety measures in the village - namely the two sets of 30 mph. signs and the northbound school sign you previously listed.

A direct comment on the remarks made by the Head of the East Kent Road Car Company would also be reassuring.

I realise that the quantity of material forwarded in my last letter may have delayed your reply somewhat, so in this and future letters I will restrict myself to pointing out dangers only two at a time. Enclosed please find Addendum 1 to my previous notes.

I shall quite understand if you delay comment on these two points until due consideration has been given them - but I would remind you as before, that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,


John Purchase

H. This photograph shows the junction of Patrinxbourne Road with High Street, Bridge. You will note that to see clearly fast approaching traffic is almost impossible. The photograph was taken forward of the driver's position. The Primary School is in the Patrinxbourne Road.

Quotation from the Kent Messenger, January 5th., 1962, from remarks by Miss Seath, Headmistress:
"It is very dangerous here because of the great speed of cars going through to Dover. Many don't observe the 30 mph. limit".

I. At the other end of the village, Conyngham Lane (Laundry Lane) opens abruptly on to the hill approach to the High Street. New houses have been built here, all with garages. Note the 30 mph. sign up the hill, and the speed of the car.

Quotation from the same newspaper, this time of remarks by Mr. A. Taylor, Chairman of the Parish Council:
"In the summer, cars do 60 and 70 mph. through Bridge".



H.

Photographed 24.2.1962.
1.30 pm.
(210/9).



I.

Photographed 24.2.1962
2.15 pm.
(210/12)

M2 FINISHED BY NEXT SPRING

Traffic Will Flood Canterbury

Minister Visits New Bridge

WORK started in Canterbury during the weekend on the first stages of the A2 Diversion and Ring Road. The scheme should take at least two years to complete, but long before then—certainly by next summer—traffic will be pouring down 25 miles of new motorway from Strood to Brenley Corner.

Drivers who have avoided the A2 in the past because of long hold-ups at the Medway towns bottleneck are bound to start using the new road—which is

Novel Devices

Then he toured all the workings, seeing a number of construction devices being used for the first time in Britain. They are causing great interest among foreign engineers.

He visited a yard where the pre-stressed concrete beams are cast and held an informal Press conference—standing on a bench in a workmen's canteen.

The motorway will cross the River Medway over a new bridge now under construction near Rochester—and it was to this bridge that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Ernest Marples, M.P.) went for a progress report on Monday.

After touring the site, he told reporters that bad weather had caused delays to both bridge and road works, but he did not think there would be any serious delay to the completion date—which was due in the spring of 1963.

The £16 million motorway will have 60 other bridges—including three viaducts over valleys—but the Medway Bridge will be the largest of all in the world.

Costing £2,326,000, it will have a 500 ft. central span—the longest pre-stressed concrete, cantilever span built so far.

High Over River

The wide, central span was needed to give clearance for the barge traffic on the river—which will be 16 feet below vehicles crossing the bridge.

Two cantilever arms, each 200 ft. long, are being built out from the main river pier, and finally the 100 ft. suspended span to fill the centre gap will be cast and launched into position.

The bridge will carry dual 24 ft. carriageways, and the 8 ft. wide hard shoulders of the M2. There will also be cycle tracks and footpaths on either side of the motorway.

The viaduct approaches to the bridge also cross two railway lines—the main London-Dover line and the Maidstone-Strood route.

Nearly 5,500 tons of steel and 118,000 tons of concrete will be used in the bridge, and 187 miles of pre-stressing bar will be embedded in the concrete.

Wearing a safety helmet, Mr. Marples climbed a series of ladders until he was 130 feet up on the top of West Pier and able to inspect the work at close quarters.

Kentish Gazette
March 16th 1962

'ROSEBANK',
HIGH ST., BRIDGE,
CANTERBURY, KENT.

TEL: BRIDGE 485

HGP/14/42/068

18.3.1962

The Minister of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

"Proposed Bridge By-Pass"

Dear Sir,

I wrote on the above subject on January 14th. of this year, asking that my letter be passed to the Official whose responsibility encompassed the problem. I said that there was a number of hazards for the pedestrian and motorist in the village of Bridge which I wished to detail in a further letter.

Your Assistant Private Secretary (Mr. Carlin-Blakew?) kindly passed the correspondence to Mr. G. Davis of St. Christopher House. Mr. Davis wrote to me on your behalf explaining the present position regarding a by-pass, and adding that the "30 mph. speed limit repeater signs provided at both approaches to the village...should warn drivers that they are entering the centre of the village, and that they should take special care (and) for northbound drivers the 'school' sign should serve as a further warning".

I replied with my thanks (30.1.1962), and enclosed a brief report with photographs showing some of the hazards present in the village. I invited Mr. Davis to study the report and then repeat his Department's satisfaction with the current safety measures of two 30 mph. signs and one school sign.

My letter was acknowledged by card, and then six week's silence ensued. I wrote again a week ago (12.3.1962) repeating my invitation and adding two more hazards, again illustrated with photographs. This letter was ignored.

I believe I can assume that your Ministry does not pay lip-service only to road safety and that my points will be discussed at least. Last weekend the 'Kentish Gazette' lead story was headlined "M2 FINISHED BY NEXT SPRING - Traffic Will Flood Canterbury".

I sincerely hope that Bridge will occupy your experts' attention for a few hours before that date, for it lies on the main A2 continuation of the M2, London to Dover Road.

Yours faithfully,

Signature
John Purchese.

Chairman: Bridge School
Parent/Teacher Assoc.
Member: P.C.C. and L.O.F.
Canterbury Hospital Group.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telegrams: Transminry, London, Telex
Telephone: WATERLOO 7999, ext.

Our reference:
Your reference:

26 March, 1962

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of the Minister to acknowledge your letter of 18th March.

Yours faithfully,

Carin - P. Clark

Asst. Private Secretary

John Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank",
High St. Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent.

GW

21. CHURCHILL HOUSE, SOUTHWARK, LONDON S.E.1
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

I refer to your letters of 30th January and 12th and 18th March, 1962 about traffic conditions in Bridge and regret the delay in replying. As you correctly surmised the various points raised necessitated careful examination.

With regard to the speed limit signs it is noted that your concern is rather for the observance, by drivers, of the speed limit. Enforcement of this is a matter for the police and does not fall within my Minister's jurisdiction.

The foliage can be cut back during the summer months to ensure that it does not obstruct the visibility of the "No Waiting" and "School" signs at the crossing of the trunk road over the Nail Bourne.

Where lighting is concerned I should explain that the responsibility to light streets is vested in local authorities and that the manner in which they exercise this responsibility is not subject to the Minister's control. He can, however, contribute to the cost of lighting a trunk road, for which he is the highway authority. If your local lighting authority (presumably the Bridge Blean Rural District Council) considers that a section of trunk in its area should be lit for local safety and amenity purposes, the Minister will be prepared to consider contributing half of the cost of installation, and subsequent operation and maintenance, of a lighting system of a standard adequate for a traffic route. If the Council decides to apply for a contribution they would no doubt communicate with the Divisional Road Engineer, South Eastern Division at the above address.

We have no information about the recent fatal accident at the Union Road junction. The accident record for the three years July 1958 to June 1961 showed that three accidents occurred in the vicinity, none of which was attributable to the blind nature of the junction. Moreover the same record indicated that only one accident appears to have been due to excessive speed. The majority of accidents seem to have resulted from overtaking and in no instance did one result from road conditions. That is not however to imply that the existing road conditions are considered up to modern standards, the by pass concept would otherwise not arise.

The Minister is prepared to make local improvements to the existing road wherever and whenever possible and the Divisional Road Engineer deals with such matters on his behalf. Any further points in this particular context you wish to bring to notice should therefore be addressed to the latter.

I should also add that it is open to you if you so wish to pursue any aspect of road safety with the local authority Road Safety Committee at Canterbury.

J. Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank",
High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury,
Kent.

/So far

A Road Notorious For Accidents

Move to Ban Hazards

IN the past eight years, the volume of traffic at Littlebourne has increased by 60 per cent. The Canterbury-Sandwich road has become notorious for accidents—and any further traffic hazards should not be allowed.

This was said by a Bridge-Blean Rural District Council official on Tuesday, when Dr. E. B. Mercer appealed against the Kent County Council's refusal to allow him to build four houses on land at the rear of The Surgery, The Hill, Littlebourne.

Permission was refused because it was thought the development would introduce hazards to traffic on the main road and would form an "undesirable backland development" without any proper relation to existing or future development.

It would also be detrimental to the amenities of the locality.

For Dr. Mercer, Mr. B. W. Hinks (Arthur Marchant and Son Ltd., Ash) said the development of the site would be useful in providing a few more homes and with the limited number suggested, would not introduce any appreciable hazards to main road traffic. There was already access to and from The Surgery.

The objection of the grounds of "backland" development was in fact that such development had already been effected in three instances in the village.

Littlebourne had been referred to as a bottle-neck, but this could be considered to be at the eastern end of the High Street. Yet development was permitted for some 13 dwellings at that point and for a further 22 close by. The appeal site was some 1,100 feet from where the bottleneck existed.

Dr. Mercer, in making the application, had in mind that this land, now forming no useful purpose, could be put to a good one in providing homes," said Mr. Hinks.

Additional Hazards

Mr. J. E. Bolton, Deputy Clerk of the Bridge-Blean Council, said that there would be additional hazards on the road because of the increased number of vehicles that would use the access to The Surgery.

Mr. Hinks replied that it was not necessarily the case that if four dwelling houses were erected as proposed, there would be four extra cars. Trades vehicles would park within the access and the men would walk the rest of the way to the houses.

Giving evidence for the Council, Mr. P. J. Thackray, Engineer and Surveyor, said that the site was 200 feet long and 100 feet deep and comprised a disused tennis court and part of a garden.

The provision of a number of dwellings would be out of keeping with the character of the neighbourhood and would intend to change the existing form of development. It was desirable that the people's quiet enjoyment of the area should not be disturbed, and it would be difficult

Bridge children not safe yet

IT will be some time before the children of Bridge will be able to play in the safety of a village recreation ground.

Since the last field in the village was taken for building use last year, the children have had to make do with the streets.

Then the Earl Mount Charles offered the village four acres of the Marquess of Conyngham's estate. But access to the field is proving difficult.

The field is at the back of houses lining the High-street, and to the side of the River Nailbourne.

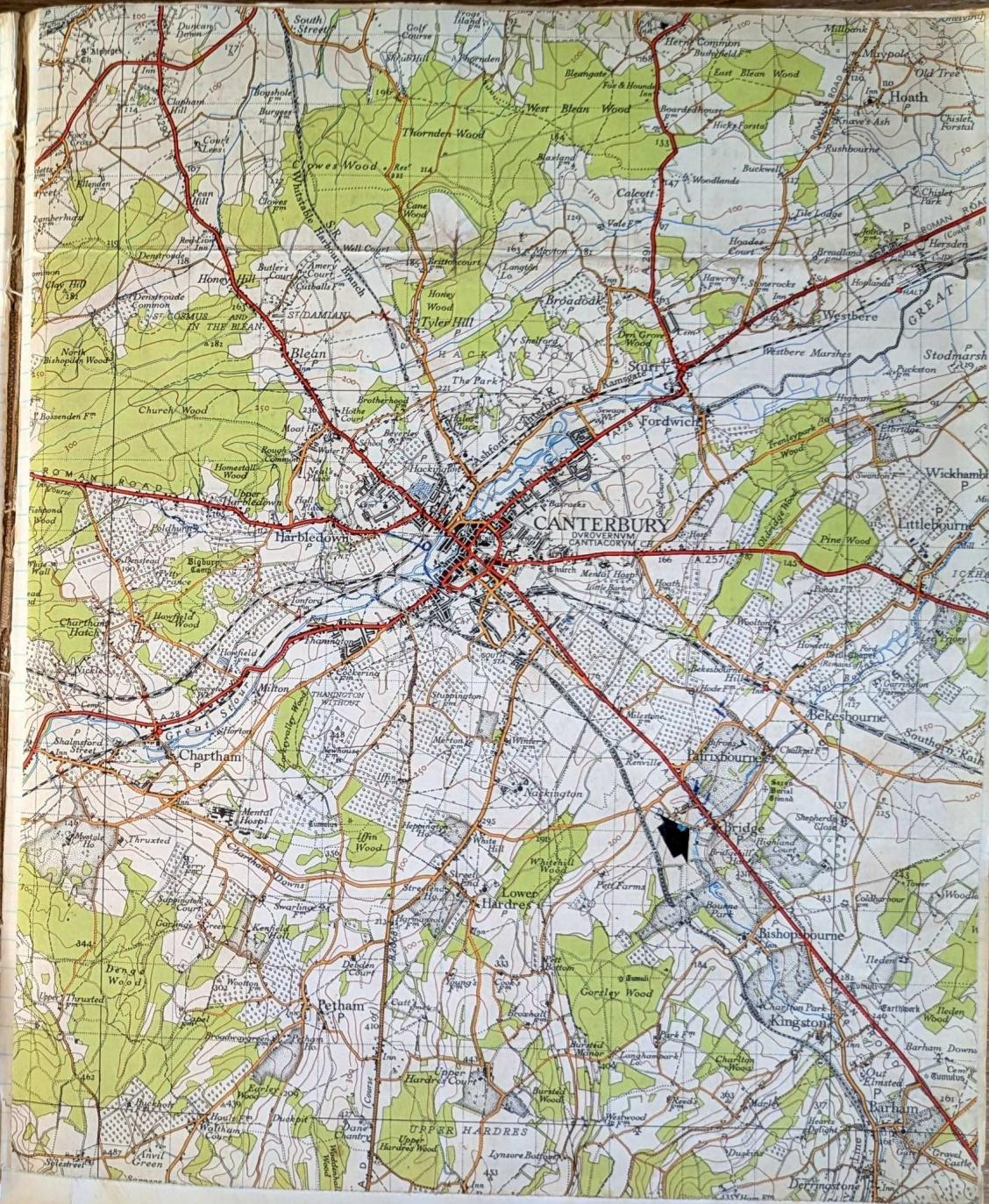
The council are contemplating building a concrete bridge across the river.

But before parents can sit back knowing their children play in safety, £500 will have to be raised.

KENTISH EXPRESS.
30.3.1962

A SIMILAR PROBLEM.

KENTISH GAZETTE.
30.3.1962



'ROSEBANK',
HIGH ST., BRIDGE,
CANTERBURY, KENT.

TEL: BRIDGE 485

HGP/14/42/068

G. Davis, Esq.,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

"Proposed Bridge By-pass".

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated the 22nd. March, 1962, in which you answered my notes concerning safety in High Street, Bridge, Kent. If I may, I will summarise your reply.

Speeding. The observance of the speed limit signs is the responsibility of the Police, who should be consulted.

Lighting. The responsibility is that of the Local Authority, who should be consulted.

Improvement. This is the responsibility of the Divisional Road Engineer upon consultation.

Road Safety. This is the responsibility of the local Road Safety Committee, who should be consulted.

Future needs. Only time can show what increase of traffic will result from M2.

Sir, I am well aware what will happen to this correspondence if I write to all these other bodies. It will proliferate to no result. That is why I originally wrote to your Minister asking to be put in touch with the official whose responsibility encompassed this problem, so that I could communicate directly. You will agree, I am sure, that I should continue to lay my case before the Department which is in the position of overall control. Your knowledge of the situation is clearly invaluable.

I have noted that you refer to the High Street, Bridge, firstly as a Trunk Road, (your para. 4), and say that the Ministry does not imply that the existing road conditions are considered up to modern standards, (your para. 5). In these circumstances I appreciate your hesitation to reiterate your previous statement (25.1.1962) that the two 30 mph. speed limit signs and the northbound school sign are sufficient for road safety in the village.

As regards your comment on the report that traffic will saturate the Canterbury area, I would remind you that at Chartham to the west of the city, and Littlebourne to the east, as with Bridge to the south, there are movements afoot to bring firmly to your

2.4.1962

'ROSEBANK',
HIGH ST., BRIDGE,
CANTERBURY, KENT.

TEL: BRIDGE 485

HGP/14/42/068.

2.

Minister's notice our disquiet at the road safety position because of fast traffic, inadequate roads, and indifference.

I enclose details of two further points concerning Bridge High Street, together with illustrative photographs, forming Addendum 2 to my previous notes. I shall quite understand if you delay comment on these two points until due consideration has been given them - but I would remind you that events have a way of outstripping preparedness, as before.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese
John Purchese

Chairman: Bridge School
Parent/Teacher Assoc.
Member: P.C.C. and L.O.F.
Canterbury Hospital Group.

Enc. Addendum 2.
Registered.

P 2297 G
K735694

**CERTIFICATE OF POSTING
FOR RECORDED DELIVERY**

Name <u>G. Davis</u> <u>LSA</u> and	Date Stamp
Address <u>The Ministry of Transport</u> <u>of</u>	
Addressee <u>St. Christopher House</u> <u>Southwark Street, S.E.1</u>	
For Instructions see over	
SI-4378 B.B.LTD. 11/60	

2.4.62
John Purchese
Accepting Officer's Initials: *J.P.*

J. This photograph shows the junction of Brewery Lane with High Street, Bridge. You will note that clearly to see fast approaching traffic is almost impossible. The photograph was taken forward of the driver's position.

Quotation from the 'Kentish Express', 30.3.1962
"BRIDGE CHILDREN NOT SAFE YET. It will be some time before the children of Bridge will be able to play in the safety of a village recreation ground. Since the last field in the village was taken for building use last year, the children have had to make do with the streets."

A field which it is hoped will provide a recreation space lies behind the buildings to the left of the photograph. There is, as yet, no means of access.

K. This photograph shows Bridge Farm (arrowed) now derelict and due for rebuilding into a large housing scheme. This estate, in a year or two, will be adding its quota of cars to the street, and will have its own access problem because of the fast through traffic.

Quotation from "The Kent Messenger", 5.1.1962.
"Fear stalks Bridge, near Canterbury - the 20th. century fear of death on the road. For the old-world High Street is a one-mile stretch of the London-Dover A2. For twenty years villagers have campaigned for special safety measures. They have seen adults and children killed, and once parents formed a human barrier across the road as a protest against fast traffic. But the authorities have done very little to alleviate the ever-present danger."



J. (210/10).
Photographed: 12.30pm.
18.3.62



K. (212/10).
Photographed: 1pm.
25.3.1962

I refer to your letter of 2nd April, 1962. My letters of 25th January and 22nd March, 1962, explained the Minister's position with regard to the Bridge By-Pass and the various other points raised. I am afraid that I am unable to add anything further to what I have already said regarding those matters such as enforcement of speed limits and lighting which are not my Minister's responsibilities. It would be a very grave matter were he to attempt to assume responsibilities ~~already~~ vested in the authorities already mentioned and I am therefore to ask you to communicate with those authorities if you wish to pursue those matters.

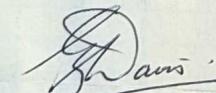
As stated in my letter of 22nd March the Minister is prepared to make local improvements to the existing road wherever and whenever possible. As also stated, the Divisional Road Engineer is the responsible and competent person who deals with such matters on the Minister's behalf, and I have passed your letter to him to deal with and reply to. He is also aware of the points raised in your previous letters.

The reference in my letter of 22nd March to existing road conditions not being up to modern standards related solely to engineering considerations, as the allusion to the by-pass was intended to illustrate, and did not imply any opinion as to the adequacy or otherwise of the number of traffic signs on the road.

In conclusion I would add that the Divisional Road Engineer would like to know of any further points you wish to bring to his notice affecting local road matters within the Minister's competence so that he may be fully aware of and consider them together within the overall perspective.

I therefore suggest it would be of advantage both to you and him were you to now let him have any remaining points you still wish to bring up.

Yours faithfully,



(G. DAVIS)

J. Purchese Esq.,
"Rosebank"
High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury,
Kent.

HGP/14/42/068

14.4.1962

G. Davis, Esq.,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

"Proposed Bridge By-pass".

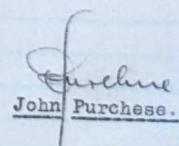
Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated the 4th April, 1962, in which you explained that the Divisional Road Engineer would like to know of further points regarding the existing road conditions. I am preparing this material, but I wish to examine conditions over the Easter Holiday period, so possibly you will excuse my not going into detail in this letter.

I understand that your Minister is not directly responsible for the enforcement of road speed limits or lighting, but I would gather that the following point of overall policy would come within his competence. I have been told by a senior official of a road organisation that no decision is intended by the Ministry regarding the development of the local A2 road until a decision has been made concerning the building of a Channel tunnel or a Channel bridge. This point has also been told me by the head of the local television station at Dover and by reporters of a Canterbury newspaper. In other words, this is a widely held belief in this part of Kent, and one calling - I believe - for comment.

The fear concerning High Street, Bridge, I would repeat, is not primarily what traffic conditions are now; but what they will be when the M2 is completed and more European traffic is passing through the village as a result of the contemplated link with the Continent. We do not wish to be found unprepared.

Yours faithfully,


John Purchese.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E. 1
Telegrams: *Transmintry*, London, Telex
Telephone: WATERLOO 7999, ext.

HGP 14/42/068

Our reference:

Your reference:

24th April, 1962

Dear Sir,

Proposed Bridge By-Pass

I write on behalf of Mr. Davis to thank you for your letter of 14th April.

Yours faithfully,

L. I. DURRANT

L. I. DURRANT

John Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank",
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury,
Kent

Kentish Gazette, April 27, 1962

Banshee Wail Wakes Sturry Bridge Traffic Menace

No Hope For Bridge

In regard to traffic conditions at Bridge, the Clerk of the K.C.C. wrote that the Highway Authority would continue to press the Ministry of Transport for an early start on the Bridge by-pass, although it seemed unlikely that a decision would be given until the outcome of the Channel Tunnel project was known.

Consideration had also been given to the placing of "Black Spot" signs as an interim measure, but, despite the accident rate in the village, it had been shown in investigation that Bridge was not among the 50 worst areas in the county and, in any event, doubt had been expressed that such signs would have much effect. In the circumstances, the K.C.C. had decided that no further action could be taken.

Cllr. A. Taylor said he was very disappointed that the K.C.C. were not going to do anything in the matter. For years and years they had been trying to get something done at Bridge and now it did not look as if they would get anything done any more than 20 years ago.

Traffic through the village was now three times more than a year or two ago and there was the greatest difficulty in crossing the road.

He recalled that some years ago he resigned from the Road Safety Committee when the pedestrian crossing was removed from the High Street and since then matters had got worse and worse.

"I wish to register my protest," said Cllr. Taylor. "They are waiting for people to get killed and then they will begin to play ball—but not before that's what they are waiting for and they practically say so!"

Cllr. A. J. Ross said he had the greatest sympathy with Cllr. Taylor and, if there was anything that could be done, he

would do it. It was, however, most unfortunate that there were 60 or 70 Kent villages like Bridge and it was difficult to differentiate between them.

Sorry as they were for Bridge, it was just not possible to do anything until they got the M2.

Cllr. Taylor: And how long will that be?

Cllr. Ross replied that it might not be very long if the Common Market came. He agreed with the K.C.C. that it was not much good putting up "Black Spot" signs. If they were stuck up all over the county, nobody would take any notice of them.

Cllr. Taylor said that on Sunday evenings, when traffic was returning from the Lydden motor-cycle track, a police officer was on duty near the church and, when they saw him, drivers came down the hill very quietly. A new road would not be necessary if police were on duty.

Cllr. A. R. Palmer suggested that the Bridge Parish Council should find a number of Special Constables. If they were on duty, it would help solve the problem.

Cllr. Taylor: Once I offered to do the job myself, but they wouldn't have me!

Cllr. Reid said conditions at Hersden were also dangerous.

Cllr. T. F. Ash said that too many people went through Bridge too fast. He thought they should approach the Police to ensure the strict enforcement of the speed limit. That was done at Hersden, which was not nearly so dangerous.

The Clerk (Mr. I. Soilleux) said the Police were sympathetic and were patrolling the road. He endorsed Cllr. Palmer's suggestion that Specials should be recruited. The Police could only do their best with the men they had available.

KENTISH EXPRESS, April 27, 1962

No Channel tunnel, no village by-pass?

A BY-PASS for the traffic-plagued village of Bridge, on the main Canterbury-to-Dover road, may depend on the Channel Tunnel scheme.

Kent County Council's highways department have told Bridge-Blean council that until the Channel project has been decided, it is unlikely that a decision will be made on the by-pass.

But pressure will continue on the Ministry for the new road, which has been called for by residents who are alarmed at the speeding cars in their narrow main street.

And Bridge is not to be dotted with "black spot" signs. The local council has been told they do not have much effect and in any case Bridge is not among the worst 50 areas in Kent.

'ROSEBANK',
HIGH ST., BRIDGE,
CANTERBURY, KENT.

TEL: BRIDGE 485

HGP/14/42/068

28.4.1962

G. Davis, Esq.,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

"Proposed Bridge By-pass".

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank Mr. L.I. Durrant for his acknowledgement on your behalf of my last letter. Enclosed please find Addendum 3 to my original report. Possibly, having read this material, you would pass it to the Divisional Road Engineer for action. The 13 points now raised will suffice for the moment, and I shall be pleased to hear his particular comment on each hazard in due course.

On the subject of the second paragraph in my letter dated 14.4.1962, you will be interested to hear that the Bridge-Blean Rural District Council discussed this matter at a recent meeting. In the report of proceedings the following was printed:- (Kentish Gazette, 27.4.1962)

"In regard to the traffic conditions at Bridge, the Clerk of the K.C.C. wrote that the Highway Authority would continue to press the Ministry of Transport for an early start on the Bridge by-pass although it seemed unlikely that a decision would be given until the outcome of the Channel Tunnel project was known.

"... Cllr. A. Taylor said that he was very disappointed that the K.C.C. were not going to do anything in the matter. For years and years they had been trying to get something done at Bridge and now it did not look as if they would get anything done any more than 20 years ago. Traffic through the village was now three times more than a year or two ago and there was the greatest difficulty in crossing the road.

"... 'I wish to register my protest,' said Cllr. Taylor. 'They are waiting for people to get killed and then they will begin to play ball - but not before.'

The Clerk of the K.C.C. was also reported to have written:- "...Despite the accident rate in the village, it had been shown on investigation that Bridge was not among the 50 worst areas in the county." Presumably the Clerk spoke with Ministerial approval in these two reports.

HGP/14/42/068.

'ROSEBANK',
HIGH ST., BRIDGE,
CANTERBURY, KENT.

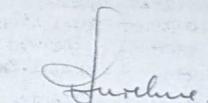
TEL: BRIDGE 485

-2-

On prima facie examination the official attitude would appear to be summed up as a) There will be no action until a Channel Tunnel or Channel Bridge has been chosen, b) There will be no action until the accident mortality rate puts Bridge into the category requiring action. If the latter point is correct and represents Ministerial policy, then it is an indictment of callous bureaucratic statistical ineptitude.

I would be grateful if you could refute these two particular points as soon as possible. Events have a way of outstripping preparedness, and the M2 Medway Towns Motorway and the Canterbury By-Pass are both due for completion next year.

Yours faithfully,



John Purchese
Chairman: Bridge School
Parent/Teacher Assoc.
Member: P.C.C. and L.O.F.
Canterbury Hospital Group.

Enc. Addendum 3.

L. This 'No-Waiting' sign is at the junction of Brewery Lane and High Street, Bridge. The lettering is unpainted with the result that the sign is ignored. Parked vehicles impede the vision of drivers entering the High Street and reduces the available width of the road. The reverse side of the sign is painted (see photograph J) - so what does the Ministry want the motorist to do?

M. The Village Hall opens directly onto the High Street, where the pavement width is 67". The Hall is used by children, a teenage Youth Club and elderly groups. Over the Easter Weekend the traffic was ceaselessly passing at speed, to attack the hill confronting it.

Facts. Repeated, to conclude this first report.

There are 897 people in Bridge.
 There are 90 children attending the Bridge Primary School 80 yards from the High Street.
 There is a hospital and home for elderly men and women 100 yards from the High Street. There are over 100 inmates, many ambulant.
 There are nearly 300 old age pensioners, whose pensions are drawn at the village Post Office - in the High Street.

Quotes.

Mr. A. Taylor. (Chairman, the Parish Council). "I do not think that the by-pass will come in my lifetime"
Miss O. Seath. (Headmistress, Bridge Primary School). "You take your life in your hands in Bridge."
Mr. J.D. Smith. (Road Safety Officer). "We are continually fighting the Ministry and the whole bag of tricks, and we cannot get anywhere."



(213:6).
 Photographed
 10.45. 31/3/62.



(216:)
 Photographed:
 2.45 pm.
 3.4.1962.



DIVISIONAL ROAD ENGINEER
(METROPOLITAN)

St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telephone: WATERLOO 7999 Ext. 3297

Our reference: RDL. 34/6T71

Your reference:

23 May, 1962

Dear Sir,

Proposed Bridge By-Pass

I am directed to refer to the correspondence with the illustrative photographs about the traffic conditions in Bridge.

It is appreciated that you have taken a great deal of trouble to illustrate the points to which you wish to draw attention, and you have given a very clear picture of the conditions in Bridge in relation to the traffic passing through, and the layout of the existing road.

There is no implication whatever intended, in any replies already sent to you, that the Department does not regard the situation as unsatisfactory, and it is unfortunate that innuendos are voiced, as they frequently are, that the highway policy, either of this Department, or of Local Authorities, is based on a caption that "someone must be killed before action is necessary." This is a deplorable implication, and is so patently untrue, that it surely does not require refutation.

The various points which you have brought up, apart from those which are matters for the Police, or Lighting Authority, are being investigated to see whether local

J. Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,

High Street,
Bridge, near Canterbury,
Kent.

/remedial



DIVISIONAL ROAD ENGINEER
(METROPOLITAN)

St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telephone: WATERLOO 7999 : Ext. 3297

Our reference: RDL. 34/6T71

Your reference:

22nd June, 1962

Dear Sir,

Proposed Bridge By-Pass

With further reference to the letter sent to you on the 23rd May, 1962 the various points which you raise about conditions in Bridge have been investigated, and it is agreed by the County Surveyor that Group A lighting would improve conditions ~~considerably~~, but there is the question whether the Parish Council would be prepared to bear half the cost after the deduction of 50%, ~~even~~ if the Minister were prepared to make a grant.

It is considered that no real improvement can be made to conditions in Bridge without considerable expense, which could be better utilised by constructing the proposed by-pass. It is understood that conditions at Bridge are no worse, in fact, they are probably better, than in many other villages in Kent and the accident record is low compared with similar places.

Yours faithfully,

for Divisional Road Engineer

J. Purchese, Esq.,
Rose Bank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Nr. Canterbury,
Kent.

GDH/DW

The Divisional Road Engineer,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

30.6.1962

RDL.34/6T71
HGP/14/42/068.

"The Proposed Bridge By-Pass".

Dear Sir,

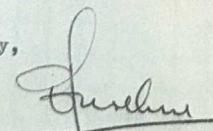
Thank you for the letters dated 23rd. May, 1962 and 22nd. June, 1962, which commented on notes and photographs supplied to Mr. G. Davis of St. Christopher House by myself in earlier correspondence.

I must first apologise for the delay in reply to your letters, but I have been away from this country for a period on business.

I am grateful for the attention given my notes; but I have to point out firstly that your Department seems only to consider the present circumstances - which, it is admitted on both sides, are poor road conditions but not exceptionally bad. I have been at some pains to awake Mr. Davis to the threat that the building of M2 is creating. Your Ministry is spending a great deal of money in providing an excellent motorway from the outskirts of London to the junction with Thanet Way and A2, just before Canterbury. Your Ministry is also doing what it can to provide a good feeder road to the M2 from Central London. When these roads are completed, and increased Continental travel as a result of the contemplated economic links, has also appeared; I say, and so do many people living in Bridge, that the road through the village will be quite inadequate and positively dangerous to the inhabitants and the travelling motorists.

My second point is that since the authorities will not put the Bridge By-Pass in hand until the death rate in the High Street justifies this measure, I am proposing now to make this correspondence available to the Coroner in the event of the next fatality in High Street, Bridge - and I shall continue to point out the information given to the Ministry at all subsequent enquiries concerning any road fatality that follows.

Yours faithfully,



M2

The letters 'M2' are the Ministry of Transport's designation for the new Medway Towns by-pass Motorway, opening next year.

You have experienced already the heavy traffic through this village, but M2 will mean a ceaseless flood. With possible Common Market links, the Dover Road will assume a national importance. Vehicles will roar past day and night.

The Ministry refuse to see any danger. They have said so repeatedly, in writing.

Our children and elderly folk must be protected from a 'Race-track High Street'!

DON'T YOU AGREE ?

Please become a supporter for

BRIDGE BY-PASS

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURHESSE, 'ROSEBANK', HIGH STREET, BRIDGE, KENT.

Issued to all Bridge residents 22.7.62

One Man's Fight for a By-Pass

The Fears of Bridge

"KENTISH GAZETTE" REPORTER

As an ever-increasing volume of traffic thunders through Bridge, villagers grow uneasy—they find little consolation in the possibility of a by-pass.

A snarling engine or squeal of brakes can spell tragedy and heartbreak to a family. Friends living on either side of the A2 are separated by a common enemy—the motorist. Old age pensioners live in fear.

But one man believes in action. Since January, 37-year-old school recordist, Mr. John Purchese, of Rose Bank, High Street, Bridge, has been writing letters to the Ministry of Transport and the Divisional Road Engineer, compiling an illustrated dossier on Bridge and traffic, and conducting a "small town" stirring up campaign.

"I have been at some pains to point out the threat which the building of the M2 is creating," he told me.

"The Ministry is spending a great deal of money to provide an excellent motorway from the outskirts of London to the junction with the Thames Way and A2 just before Canterbury.

"It is also doing what it can to provide a good feeder road to the M2 from central London.

"With the completion of these roads and increased continental traffic, the result of contemplated economic links—I say, and so do many other villagers, that the road through the village

will be inadequate and dangerous.

"Since the authorities will not put the Bridge by-pass in hand until they think the High Street death rate justifies it, I propose to make correspondence with the Minister of Transport, and have collected available to the Committee in the event of the next fatality.

"I shall continue to point out the information given to the Ministry at all subsequent enquiries concerning road fatalities and I may well shoot a 35 mm. film."

In recent letters, the Divisional Road Engineer, Mr. Collier Dr. Purchese, "There is no implication whatever intended in our correspondence that the department regards traffic conditions at Bridge as satisfactory."

"It is unfortunate that innuendos are voiced, as they frequently are, that the highway policy, either of this government, or of local authorities, is based on a caption that 'Someone must be killed before action is necessary.'

"This is a deplorable implication, and is so patently untrue, that it surely does not require refutation."

"The points which you have mentioned are being investigated to see whether remedial measures are practicable. However, the major solution to the problem is dependent on its comparative priority, in relation to other urgent cases over the whole country."

"All schemes such as this one, on the principal traffic routes, take their due place in order of priority, unless they depend on other overriding factors involving decisions of national importance."

"It is considered that no real improvement can be made to conditions in Bridge without considerable expense, which could be better utilised by constructing the proposed by-pass."

"It is understood that conditions at Bridge are no worse, in fact they are probably better, than in many other villages in Kent, and the accident record is low compared with similar places."



Mr. John Purchese

Kentish Gazette, July 20, 1962

22.7.1962

The Producer,
"Town and Country",
B.B.C., Broadcasting House,
London, W.1

Dear Sir,

If you contact your local B.B.C. correspondent (I believe him to be Malcolm Mitchell of the Kentish Gazette) you will find that there is a topic of conversation among the villagers of Bridge that highlights one problem concerning the Common Market! It is the dangerous High Street, which the Ministry of Transport has promised to by-pass for the past twenty years—but done nothing about.

I enclose a leaflet which was put out through the village today.

My letter drawing this to your attention is not designed to publicise our present attempts, but to have material on your files so that when M2 is opened and fatalities occur, you can at least briefly mention that the Ministry was well aware of its obligations as early as July 1962.

Yours faithfully,

Purchese
John Purchese.
Chairman: Bridge School
Parent/Teacher Association.

'MINISTRY REFUSE TO SEE DANGER'

DON'T WAIT UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE

Support the movement to reduce the traffic menace in Bridge by writing your comments to: MR. G. DAVIS, THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, at St. Christopher House, Southwark St., London, S.E.1. - Ref. HGP/14/42/068.

He is the Official in charge of Bridge's traffic difficulties.

PLEASE MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, HIGH ST., BRIDGE, KENT

Issued to all Bridge residents. 29.7.62.

Kent Messenger, July 27th, 1962 - 7

'VILLAGERS' DANGER' WARNING TO MOTORISTS

Bridge By-Pass

THE volume of week-day traffic using a by-pass seldom exceeds and is usually less than the volume which continues to use the old road because of the large proportion of traffic which is local. In most cases where a by-pass is contemplated or has been provided the existing road may need improving as and when opportunity occurs to provide adequately for local traffic. When schemes for the improvement of existing routes in built-up areas are under consideration it should be borne in mind that a narrow section of road in such an area often results in drivers reducing speed and using more care, thereby reducing the risk of accident."

This extract from the County Road Plan ("Planning Basis for Kent") should be of some interest to those who are asking for a Bridge By-Pass.

They might also like to consider the following, from the same report, "From Canterbury to Dover

the traffic is comparatively small and it is considered that a single carriageway 30 feet in width will suffice for that section."

The plan was published in 1948 but, under "Future Development of Traffic" stated: "This report has been prepared on the assumption that sooner or later restrictions will cease and pre-war increase to saturation point will continue."

Kentish Gazette. 27.7.62

SOUND recordist John Purchase, 37, of Rosebank, High Street, Bridge, near Canterbury, spent the week-end turning out printed appeals for a by-pass for the village.

Bridge is on the A2 London-Dover road. Motorists swooping down one hill into the village from High Street keep their feet hard down on their accelerators right through the village "in order to get up the equally steep hill at the other end."

The result has been a number of accidents and some deaths, children among them. The whole of the village is behind Mr. Purchase in his campaign. So is the rural council.

The new leaflets issued by Mr. Purchase this week were headed "M2."

DESIGNATION

They went on: "The letters M2 are the Ministry of Transport's designation for the new Medway Towns by-pass. Motorway opening next year."

"You have experienced already the heavy traffic through this village, but M2 will mean a ceaseless flood."

"With possible Common Market links, the Dover Road will assume a national importance. Vehicles will roar past day and night."

"The Ministry refuse to see any danger. They have said so repeatedly, in writing."

"Our children and elderly folk must be protected from a 'Race-track High Street'! Don't you agree? Please become a supporter for Bridge By-Pass."

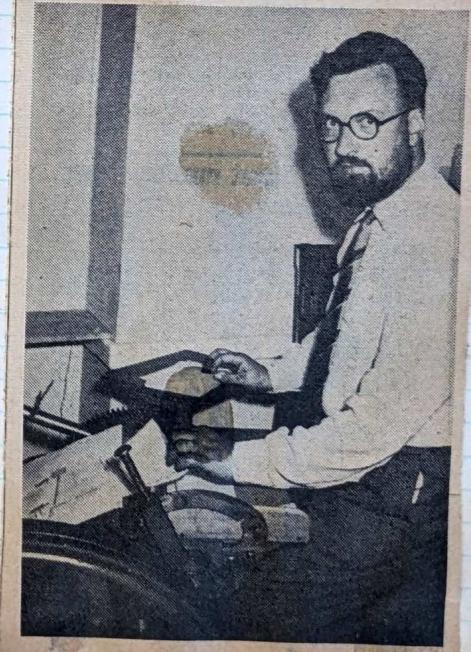
The Ministry of Transport said last year, when the Kent Messenger first told of the plight of Bridge, that no special measures would be taken to slow traffic in the village because it would eventually be by-passed.

MINISTRY'S PLAN

Three weeks ago the Kent Messenger revealed exclusively that the Ministry has a plan to continue the M2 from Faversham to Lydden, near Dover, by-passing Canterbury AND BRIDGE

But the line of the extension of the motorway has not yet been agreed by everyone concerned, and it will not be started until some time after the M2 is completed to Faversham.

As a result, the greatly increased traffic will pour down the narrow and dangerous A2 through Canterbury, and Bridge, to Dover, for several years to come—hence the justifiable fears of the people of Bridge.



JOHN PURCHASE printing the appeals

PETITION

To the Right Honourable Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport

Since the High Street through the village of Bridge in Kent was designed for light horse traffic during past centuries, and since the present heavy flow of motor vehicles through the village will be enlarged by the completion of the M2 motorway and possible Continental links, The undersigned Villagers petition the Minister to view the situation with their alarm, and act promptly to avert this threat to their children and elderly folk.

(564 signatures were obtained in a village with 897 inhabitants).

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, HIGH ST, BRIDGE, KENT

Issued to Bridge Residents, 29-7-62, for completion.

Parish Council Can Do No More

Bridge Traffic Problem

How to prevent speeding traffic through Bridge? When the question was posed at a meeting of Bridge Parish Council last Thursday the councillors decided that they could do nothing more.

"We have had this time and time again," said the chairman (Cllr. H. J. Price), "and we have already done everything in our power."

The Council wished Mr. John Purchase luck in his campaign but decided to take no further action at present.

Cllr. E. J. Purssard complained that uneven pavements in the main street were becoming a positive danger to pedestrians. He said that a number of times he had seen people step into the road because it was easier to walk there.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Divisional Highways Surveyor (Mr. B. G. Chittenden) requesting improvements.

A recreation ground for the village is still in the distant future. At the last meeting of the Council on May 24 negotiations were started for a field of about four acres flanking the Patrinxbourne road.

An application was made to the Bridge-Blean R.D.C. for planning permission for a bridge across the Neighbour, which divides the field from the road. This step followed the refusal by the Minister of Transport to make a road from the High Street on the grounds that it would increase existing traffic hazards.

The Clerk (Mr. A. H. Croucher) reported that he had since received a letter from the Bridge-Blean R.D.C. Surveyor (Mr. P. J. Thackray) stating that detailed drawings of the bridge were required before permission could be granted.

Cllr. L. J. Williams said that he had investigated the types of

bridges that could be used. He estimated a concrete one would cost £1,000.

It was agreed to set up a sub-committee to consider the types of bridges available and leave the matter until their report had been received.

Coal lorries that passed through Bridge and covered all the houses with black dust were complained about by the Council several years ago.

At that time the firms concerned agreed to cover their lorries with canvas.

Cllr. H. Stickles said that the menace was recurring because the lorries were, once again, not covered with canvas.

It was agreed to send a letter of complaint to the Bridge-Blean R.D.C.

A letter is to be sent to the Divisional Highways Surveyor by the Council requesting that something should be done to prevent people from using the Bridge lay-by as a urinal.

It was said that it would not be quite so bad if those who used it for that purpose were not visible from the road.

"It's a national problem," said the chairman, "Lay-bys all over the country are used as urinals."

Three new litter bins are to be placed at regular distances apart through the village. The chairman and the vice-chairman (Cllr. H. Hawkins) are to decide which types.

Bridge Petition Minister

Prompt Action Urged

A petition asking for "prompt action" to avert a threatened flood will be sent to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Ernest Marples, M.P.) by Bridge villagers.

The petition, organised by 37-year-old sound recordist John Purchase, of Rose Bank, High Street, Bridge, and already signed by half the villagers, reads:

"Since the High Street through the village of Bridge in Kent was designed for light horse traffic during past centuries and since the present heavy flow of motor vehicles through the village will be enlarged by the completion of the M2 motorway and possible Continental links, the undersigned villagers petition the Minister to view the situation with alarm, and act promptly to avert this threat to their children and elderly folk."

Kentish Gazette 10-8-62

A village protest against road danger threat

FOUR hundred people, half of the population of Bridge, A2, which slices through their village, four miles from Canterbury,

The appeal to ease the fast flow of heavy traffic on the narrow roads through the village centre is to go to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Ernest Marples.

It is being organised by Mr. John Purchase, 37, sound recordist, of Rosebank, High-st, Bridge.

His letter says: "Since the High-st. was designed for light horse traffic during past centuries, and since the present flow of motor vehicles through the village will be enlarged by the completion of the M2 motorway and possible Continental links, the undersigned villagers petition the Minister to view the situation with their alarm, and act promptly to avert this threat to their children and elderly folk."

Bridge lies on the main route between Canterbury and Dover. It carries much Continental traffic from London and after completion of the M2 project at the Medway it is likely to become even more used.

Kentish Express 10-8-62

Light-horse traffic counts

MORE than 400 people at Bridge, near Canterbury, have signed a petition to Mr. Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport.

They say "Since the High Street through the village was designed for light horse traffic during past centuries, and since the present heavy flow of motor vehicles through the village will be enlarged by the completion of the M2 and possible continental links, the undersigned petition the Minister to view the situation with their alarm, and act promptly to avert this threat to their children and elderly folk."

Villagers say cars tear through and use the High Street as a race track.

A sound recordist, Mr. John Purchese, is the man behind the campaign, and he has the full backing of the local road safety committee and of the parish and rural councils. He has issued a car sticker which says "Don't wait until it is too late—Support the movement to reduce the traffic menace in Bridge by writing your comments to Mr. G. Davis, the Ministry of Transport, at St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, London, SE1—Ref. HGP/14/42/68. He is the official in charge of Bridge's traffic difficulties."

Mr. Purchese, 37, who lives in High Street, ends the label message with this plea—"Please make your voice heard!"

Kent Messenger
10.8.1962

Kentish Gazette 25.8.62

Third Time Fair?

THE villagers and others who are fighting the battle of Bridge deserve success, if only for their perseverance. The second "airing" of the traffic problem in the "Town and Country" programme of the B.B.C. does, at least, draw the attention of listeners to the difficulties which the people of Bridge find themselves and it is of little use to tell them that there is no "ready solution" to a problem similar to those which affect so many other main-road villages. I understand that those words, or others like them, have been uttered, and that they can now be "taken as read."

Among the more facetious suggestions made was I am told a viaduct starting at the top of Town Hill and ending just below the Highland Court turning, leaving the village itself to doze peacefully below the thundering traffic. Possibly the man who suggested this had the village of Huckling, in North Kent, in mind, where a similar joking suggestion a good many years ago led to the temporary use of a new name for the village: Hucking-Glassbridge.

The name still persists although its origin is almost forgotten. If Bridge gets a glass viaduct, we might revive the old name of the parish and call it Blackmanbury-Glassbridge!

Kentish Gazette, August 31, '62

Bridge Speeding

The perennial problem of traffic speeding through the main street of Bridge was once again raised. Dr. Whiteside suggested that the American plan of having about 100 yards of badly surfaced road, known as a "rumble road," might be considered—with warning notices to approaching drivers. Although he did not advocate it, he thought it might be brought up for consideration. If they were going to wait for the by-pass they would never deal with the problem.

It was pointed out that this was on the lines of the corrugated road that Cllr. J. F. Montgomery had mentioned at a previous meeting.

Cllr. A. J. Ross: As I should be one of those regularly driving over it, I should strongly object!

Dr. Whiteside retorted that they had been talking about the problem for years and years, but when a suggestion was put forward there were objections!

Still Waiting

Cllr. Ross said that as far as the Bridge by-pass was concerned, they were still waiting for the Ministry of Transport to say what route it should take. They said they were not sure about the Channel Tunnel and were making that the excuse.

He agreed, when the point was raised, that parking in the main street did have the effect of slowing down the traffic. He suggested that a rumble road should first be tried at Hersden!

Dr. McIntosh considered that such a road would result in more accidents than at present.

Cllr. Craft said that a corrugated road was discussed at some length by the Road Safety Committee, but the force were not very enthusiastic.

Cllr. J. H. Ross expressed the opinion that the trouble was that in this country they were 30 or 40 years behind the times in regard to roads. What he asked, was the use of making a dual carriageway leading into a bottleneck at Canterbury?

Cllr. Craft pointed out that an alteration to the road surface was always a danger to cyclists and particularly to motor-cyclists.

BRIDGE BY-PASS.

The B.B.C. view of this matter, explored for "Town and Country" by Sonia Callingham, broadcast on Thursday, August 9th. 1962 at 6.30 p.m.

This transcription provided by John Purchese, Bridge 485, Kent.

Kentish Gazette, September 28, 1962



22.9.1962

Rt. Hon. Leslie Thomas, M.P.,
Houses of Parliament,
London, S.W.1

The Proposed Bridge By-Pass.

Dear Sir,

You must be well aware of the traffic through the village of Bridge, just south east of Canterbury, and of the efforts of the local people to make the Ministry of Transport aware of its obligations before the opening of M2 produces such a flood of traffic as to endanger lives in the High Street.

A petition has been organised locally, and signed by nearly all the adults of the village, urging the Minister to act before it is too late.

I am aware that Littlebourne has a similar petition going forward, and I understand that the correct procedure is for the local Member of Parliament to present such documents in the House, pre-supposing his sympathy with the cause.

I would be grateful, Sir, if you would let me know whether or not you would accept these petition forms from several hundred of your constituency members.

The history of 'promises', evasive answers, official disinterest and short-sightedness that has so far marked the Ministry's attitude should surely not be allowed to continue into next year when Bridge will become the bottleneck of the M2 London - Dover motorway.

Yours faithfully,

Purchese.
John Purchese.

Encs. Sample Petition form.
Campaign leaflets.

From Leslie M. Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

26th September 1962

Dear Mr Purchese

Thank you for your letter of 22nd September regarding the proposed petition relating to the by-pass. Of course I will do anything I can to help you and the other residents of Bridge in this matter.

I am waiting for the return of the Clerk of the House who is at present on holiday. He will advise me what form the petition to Parliament should take. I will let you know immediately I hear from him and in the meantime I would like to take the matter up with the Minister of Transport. Could you give me his departmental reference as I am under the impression from your letter that you have been in correspondence with him.

I regret it will not be possible for me to present the petition before Christmas as I am leaving for the United States as Chairman of a Parliamentary delegation before the House assembles and will not be back until just before Christmas. However, I will be in touch with you again before I leave.

Yours sincerely

Leslie Thomas

John Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury.

M.P. HELPS VILLAGERS

Mr. Leslie Thomas, M.P., has promised to present the Bridge villagers' petition for a by-pass to Parliament, after Christmas. In a letter to the petition organiser, (Mr. John Purchese) he said: "I give my support to this petition. I will do everything I can to help Bridge villagers in this matter."

Kentish Gazette, September 28, 1962

Kent Messenger

THE COUNTY PAPER

ESTABLISHED 1859

23.9.62

Kent comment

Bottleneck fear

TWO by-pass projects, one vast, the other relatively small, make steady progress in Kent—the Medway motorway and the A2 diversion at Canterbury. But they are complementary, because overflow traffic from the M2 will pour into Canterbury and make use of the diversion in 1964.

What happens between the end of the motorway at Brenley Corner, near Faversham, and the start of the diversion at Harbledown, near Canterbury? Neither the County Council nor the Ministry of Transport can say for certain.

What is certain is that, unless plans are quickly brought out (and approved) to continue the M2 to Dover, as forecast, or to improve the A2 between Brenley and Canterbury, there will be road chaos most of the way from Faversham to Dover.

Rt. Hon. Leslie M. Thomas,
M.B.E., T.D., M.P.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

29.9.1962

The Proposed Bridge By-Pass.

Dear Mr. Thomas,

Thank you for your encouraging letter dated September 26th., in which you say that you will do what you can in the matter of the dangerous High Street in this village.

The Departmental reference given to correspondence with the Ministry of Transport is HGP 14/42/068, and the spokesman for the Ministry has been Mr. G. Davis, of St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, London, S.E.1 (WATERLOO 7999). My letter addressed to the Minister, at the outset of this correspondence, was answered by the Assistant Private Secretary - whose signature I read as Mr. Carlin-Black or Blake. Technical correspondence regarding particular inadequacies in the existing road, was addressed to the Divisional Road Engineer, (Metropolitan), at St. Christopher House; reference RDL 34/6T71, answered by Mr. G.D. Hewett.

The Kent Police chose Bridge High Street this week as the scene to test out new radar speed trap equipment which has just been obtained. This, I would suggest, is of particular significance, since their choice of site is at variance with Mr. Davis' comments (letter, 25.1.1962):-

"...With regard to the safety aspect, you will of course know that the road is speed restricted with 30 mph. speed limit repeater signs provided at both approaches to the village, which should warn drivers they are entering the centre of the village, and that they should take special care. For northbound drivers the 'school' sign should serve as a further warning."

His comment on the traffic to be expected when M2 opens is equally illuminating (letter, 22.3.1962):-
"...So far as extra traffic on the A2 between London and Dover is concerned, it is agreed that the Medway Motorway will attract extra traffic over lengthy sections of the route. It is however too early to say precisely how much extra traffic will pass through Bridge." Mr. R.P. Beddows, Head of the East Kent Road Car Company, was reported ("Kent Messenger" 5.1.1962) as saying:-

"To

-2-

"...To my mind there is no doubt that the completion of the Medway Motorway is going to mean heavy additional traffic on the A2 road between London and Dover."

Mr. Davis has refused three times to comment directly on this considered opinion of the Head of the East Kent Road Car Company. (My letters, 14.1.1962, 30.1.1962 and 12.3.1962).

These points possibly explain why I spoke in my last letter of a history of "promises", evasive answers, official disinterest and short sightedness that has so far marked the Ministry's attitude".

Thank you for your support,

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese.
John Purchese.

Post-scriptum. To this letter I must add my thanks for your telephone call this morning, and say that I am enclosing the Petition as arranged.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

BRIDGE BY PASS COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE !

Please support the movement by writing your comments to:

Mr. G. DAVIS, THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT,
St. Christopher House, Southwark St., London, S.E.I.

**PLEASE FOLLOW UP THE KENT
POLICE FIRST RADAR SPEED CHECK.**

■ Nearly 30 motorists were caught at 30 m.p.h. plus last Tuesday.

WRITE TO MR. DAVIS TODAY !

Published by John Purchese, High St. Bridge, Kent.

issued to Bridge residents 29.9.1968

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 29.9.1962

'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

G. Davis, Esq.,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

Dear Sir,

It is now some five months since I last wrote to you regarding the proposed by-pass for the village of Bridge, and since a number of recent events have occurred - of interest to you - I felt that you would be pleased to hear of them.

Through the summer the local Police have been watching the High Street, and standing conspicuously by the side of the road to slow down the traffic by their presence. Last Tuesday, however, to test out their new radar speed trap equipment, the Kent Police chose Bridge Hill and the entry to the High Street as the site for a few hours' experiment. Just on 30 motorists were stopped and cautioned against excessive speed during this period. In the light of these findings by the Police it is possible that you would wish to modify your original statement (25.1.1962) that with regard to the safety aspect I would of course know that the road is speed restricted with 30mph. speed limit repeater signs.

My contention throughout the correspondence that Bridge will become a dangerous bottle-neck after M2 is opened seems to be shared by the writer of an editorial comment in the "Kent Messenger" last Friday (28.9.1962). He says:- "...What is certain is that, unless plans are quickly brought out (and approved) to continue the M2 to Dover, as forecast, or to improve the A2 between Brenley and Canterbury, there will be road chaos most of the way from Faversham to Dover."

A petition has been signed by three quarters of the villagers, and this will be reaching your Minister through official channels during the near future. I hope that when you have the opportunity you will comment directly, as I have so far requested three times, on the statement of the Head of the East Kent Road Car Company quoted as saying:- "...To my mind there is no doubt that the completion of the Medway

-2-

motorway is going to mean heavy additional traffic on the A2 road between London and Dover".

Enclosed please find the latest leaflet which has been issued to all the Bridge residents. I understand that some people have been writing to you as a result of these leaflets and I hope that the receipt of these letters has helped you to assess the reality of the situation in this village. I shall quite understand if you delay comment on the points raised in this letter until due consideration has been given them, but I would point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,

Purchese
John Purchese.

Enc. Handbill.

29.9.1962

The Editor,
"The Kent Messenger",
Week Street,
Maidstone, Kent.

Dear Sir,

Your Leader writer in the issue dated September 28th. under the heading "Bottleneck Fear" speaks of the two by-pass projects now in construction on the A2 London to Dover road. There is, Sir, a third by-pass project that appears destined never to go beyond the airy dreams of a Ministry file - that of the Bridge By-Pass.

The village was the scene last week of a radar speed check by the Police, where nearly thirty drivers were caught speeding in the short while that the equipment was set up. There are two points that arise from this news item.

First, to test out new equipment the Police chose Bridge in the first instance. Surely this proves that there is a traffic danger in the village High Street; which everyone except the responsible Ministry officials seems capable of accepting.

Secondly, that in such a short while - on a weekday, note, long before M2 was opened, it was possible to catch that many speeding motorists in that short time.

A petition to the Minister is going to be handed to him by our Member of Parliament, Mr. Leslie Thomas. It was signed by threequarters of the villagers - that is, the adults almost to a man, for children were not asked to sign. I am sure that your readers will join these villagers in their hope that the outcome of the Petition will be an early start to the only solution to the traffic problem at Bridge - A by-pass.

Yours faithfully,

Purchese
John Purchese.
(Organiser of the petition)



A motor cyclist with a damaged leg: Autumn 1962.
(229/4. Photographed 30.9.'62).

29.10.1962

G. Davis, Esq.,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you a month ago today, to ask for your comments on the Police Radar speed trap operation of September 25th. which resulted in 30 motorists being stopped and cautioned during the test period of one hour - that is, at the rate of one every two minutes. There was also a request for a direct comment on the statement of the Head of the East Kent Road Car Company.

At the end of my letter I suggested that you might wish to delay your answer somewhat to these points in order that you could give due consideration to them; but I must admit that I had hoped for the favour of a reply before one calendar month had passed.

The problem of the High Street in Bridge that will follow the opening of the M2 motorway is now one month nearer reality, and I would be much obliged if you would look at the enclosed photograph of an injured motorcyclist who was in collision with a car recently in the High Street.

I have already said (30.6.1962) that I will lay my reports and correspondence in front of the Coroner in the case of the next fatality in the High Street due to traffic; so I would be exceptionally grateful to you if you would supply, with any further reasons than those so far tendered why the inhabitants of the village should view the traffic through the High Street with equanimity.

I would point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese
John Purchese.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telegrams: Transminry, London, Telex
Telephone: WATERLOO 7999, ext.

Our reference: HGP 14/42/068
Your reference:

8 November, 1962.

Dear Sir,

I refer to your letters of 29th September and 29th October about the proposed by-pass for the village of Bridge and to the petition in respect of the same proposal about which you were in touch with Mr. Leslie Thomas, the Member of Parliament for Canterbury.

I am instructed to say that your communications have been taken into account in the submission to the Minister in addition to your further comments accompanying the petition. I understand that the Minister is expected to reply very soon now to Mr. Leslie Thomas, who in turn will doubtless wish to inform you himself of the outcome of this matter within his constituency. In these circumstances and in view of the Minister's consideration of the matter, it is assumed that you will not expect any further reply from officials of the Ministry to your earlier letters.

Yours faithfully,

R. A. Pearson
R. A. Pearson

John Purchese Esq.,
"Rosebank",
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury Kent.

GA.

17.11.1962

Leslie M. Thomas, MBE., TD., MP.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

- att. Miss E. Kingston.

Dear Miss Kingston,

Thank you very much for forwarding the letter addressed to Mr. Thomas from the Minister of Transport, and your suggestion that I comment on this reply. I would only remark as follows:-

The Minister is quite correct to apply the funds of his Department on a basis of priorities. I only question his Department's advice regarding the priority given Bridge. I would have imagined that a more realistic approach would have been suggested had the Ministry and K.C.C. engineers who inspected the High Street, Bridge, recently, had they assessed correctly the weight of traffic that will result by M2 being opened. Although this figure is an unknown quantity as yet, the experience of the villagers is that traffic has more than doubled during the past five years and this alone should suggest a flood.

I regret that the fourth paragraph of the Minister's answer defeats my comprehension. I understood that the choice of a Channel Tunnel or Channel Bridge meant a basic choice of A2 or A20 as the major route to London, depending on the relative point of entry into Britain. If A2 traffic will be substantially reduced as the Minister says, what Ministerial justification can there be for the tremendous expense of M2 already under construction ?

During the past months I have been corresponding with Mr. G. Davis of St. Christopher House. His name was put forward by the Minister when I first raised this subject, and I was given to understand that he was the official whose responsibility encompassed Bridge. He has been very slow in answering my letters, and now (8.11.1962) he has declined to answer my last two letters because Mr. Thomas is in touch with the Minister. I assume that I would in no way affect that correspondence if I now wrote to him and asked if he wished all my questions to be routed through the chain of Mr. Thomas / The Minister / Mr. Davis. I would like to end with my sincere thanks to Mr. Thomas for taking up this matter, and to you for copying the Minister's letter and so kindly forwarding the original.

Yours sincerely,

John Purchese.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE 17.11.1962

'Rosebank', High Street,

Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

Mr. G. Davis, The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

Dear Mr. Davis,

My last reply from you was dated April 4th., 1962. When I wrote to you on April 14th., 1962, my letter was answered by Mr. L. Durrant; when I wrote to you on April 28th., 1962, my letter was answered by Mr. F. Samuel; when I wrote to you on September 29th., 1962 and again on October 29th., 1962, my letters were answered by Mr. R. Pearson on November 8th..

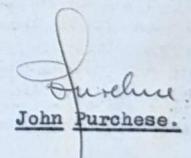
I would be most grateful for a brief but immediate answer from you personally to the following questions:-

- 1) Are you still the Official elected by your Minister to answer my letters, as being the person whose responsibility encompassed Bridge ?
- 2) If so, do you propose to fulfill your capacity in this direction ?
- 3) In view of Mr. Pearson's last paragraph regarding your Minister's answer to Mr. Leslie Thomas, M.P., - a letter I have seen - do you now require me to pass all my enquiries through the channel of Member of Parliament/Minister of Transport/Mr. Davis ?

I have notified Mr. Thomas of your apparent wish in this last direction but I would respectfully submit that it would waste considerable Parliamentary ability and Ministerial zeal.

I shall quite understand if you delay comment on the points raised in this letter until due consideration has been given them, but I would point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,


John Purchese.

From Leslie M. Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

19th November 1962

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Thank you for your further letter. I will keep this with the other correspondence on the case to show to Mr. Thomas when he returns.

It is normal procedure for correspondence from a member of the public to go direct to the Ministry official dealing with the matter and for Parliamentary cases, that is those raised by a Member of Parliament on behalf of a constituent, to go direct to the Minister or his Parliamentary Secretary. Therefore any future correspondence could go through one route or the other but if it goes through both channels at the same time then you might possibly get the same result as before - that Mr. Davis cannot comment on points raised with the Minister. If you should decide to write again to Mr. Davis, it would probably be easier all round if you sent Mr. Thomas copies of the correspondence to keep him in the picture.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Kingster

Personal Secretary

John Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1

Telegrams: *Transminry* London Telex

Telephone: WATERloo 7999, ext.

29 November, 1962.

Our reference:
Your reference:

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Mr. Davis who is a senior member in my branch has shewn me your personal letter to him of 17th November. I wonder if I might try to clear up the doubts you seem to have about where responsibility lies for dealing with Bridge's road affairs?

As I am sure you will have appreciated it is the Minister who has been given certain powers and responsibilities for roads. In turn, the Minister answers to Parliament. It is the duty of officials to advise the Minister as he may require, and that advice must be put together with many considerations in mind, and it must often include the specialist advice of engineers and others.

It was therefore quite inaccurate for you to have described Mr. Davis as "the official in charge of Bridge's traffic difficulties", or to have led people to believe that he was the person to be persuaded to build a by-pass. He was, in fact the official who on some occasions was deputed to reply to your letters. On other occasions, others had that responsibility.

Should you wish to write to the Ministry further the correct way to address your correspondence would be to "The Secretary, Ministry of Transport", and to quote the reference MGP 14/12/660. The matter can then be dealt with app

I hope that you will accept this as an effort to clear up any misunderstandings that may have arisen. I could not of course, wish to imply that you intend returning further to the Ministry in the pursuance of your views especially as the Minister has only recently written fully to Mr. Thomas on the subject. It could be quite out of order for me to seek to influence you in any way in this regard.

But if you would write to the Ministry I would like to explain that after your letter has been fully considered the final reply will be signed by the appropriate official. It might or might not on that particular occasion be Mr. Davis.

Yours sincerely,
John Purchese ^{Esq.}

Yours sincerely,

R. A. Anderson

MINISTER'S VIEWS ON BY-PASS NEEDS OF BRIDGE

*Sympathetic—but what if
Channel Tunnel is built?*

Mr. Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport, has entered the "fray" in the battle for a by-pass for the traffic-hit village of Bridge, near Canterbury, on the main London-Dover A2.

This follows a petition signed by almost every adult in Bridge, appealing for improvements—either a by-pass or urgent measures to restrict the speed of cars hurtling through the 30 m.p.h. Old-World High Street on their way to Dover and Folkestone.

The cause of Bridge was taken up by Mr. Leslie Thomas, M.P. for Canterbury, who has received a letter from Mr. Marples.

The Minister said he was fully aware that improvements were very desirable at Bridge, and he had much sympathy with the local people who wanted something done soon.

The Minister said that Bridge could only be taken

out of its proper place in the queue at the expense of another, and even more necessary scheme elsewhere. He regretted that he could not at present fit the building of a by-pass of Bridge into the road programme.

Mr. Marples added: "There will no doubt be some additional traffic when the M25 is open. But what would be the effect of a decision to build a Channel Tunnel or Bridge?

"Either would mean major changes in the road pattern in this area, and a substantial reduction in traffic through the village. Particularly in Kent just now, roads must be planned with an eye firmly on the future."

CAUGHT IN RADAR CHECK

Caught in a Police radar check at Bridge on November 23, Stanley E. Herrin, of Dartford Service Station, Faversham, was fined £3 by the St. Augustine's magistrates, at Canterbury, on Wednesday, for driving his car at 45 m.p.h. through a restricted area.

William R. Warwick, of 189 Earham Grove, Forest Gate, E.7, was fined £4 when he pleaded guilty to driving his car at 52 m.p.h. on the A2, at Bridge, on November 19. He also was caught in a Police radar check.

After being caught in the same check, Raymond S. Dixon, of Avocet, Seaford Beach, Seaford, Whitstable, was fined £5 for driving his van at 47 m.p.h.

Pleading not guilty, Dixon said that he knew Bridge was a dangerous spot and on this particular day he was following a stream of traffic down the hill and the stream came to a halt shortly after passing the radar check.

"I was not doing more than 30 m.p.h." he said.

Traffic Sgt. J. A. Garrett said that the speed equipment was erected in Bridge on the Canterbury side, and it was checked by a patrol car and found to be accurate.

Dixon had one previous conviction for speeding.

KENTISH GAZETTE 19.1.63



16.2.1963.

The Archbishop of Canterbury crosses the road,
with Vicar and two policemen.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14/42-068

DATE. 3.3.1963

'Rosebank', High Street,

Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

The Secretary,
The Ministry of Transport,
Southwark Street, S.E.1
- for circulation to:-
G. Davis, Esq.,
L. Durant, Esq.,
F. Samuel, Esq.,
R. Pearson, Esq.

Gentlemen,

I am indebted to Mr. R.A. Pearson in his letter dated Nov. 29th., 1962, for explaining the procedure to be adopted when writing to the Ministry of Transport about the road conditions through the village of Bridge. I note that a consortium of officials may variously answer any one line of enquiry.

When I originally wrote to the Minister (14.1.1962) asking to be put in touch with the official whose responsibility encompassed Bridge, I expected that gentleman to reply; but I now see that this was impossible under the structure of responsibility within the Ministry.

Having explained this, I would like to draw the Group's attention to the two enclosed photographs. The smaller of the two shows the Archbishop of Canterbury crossing the Bridge High Street on the occasion of the Induction of a new Vicar. (16.2.1963) The Vicar leads and two Policemen - one the village Sergeant - attend to see His Grace across the road. You will note the brick wall at the foot of the photograph.

The second photograph shows this wall after the impact of a lorry on the following Wednesday, February 20th. 1963. The lorry driver, Mr. Robert Holbrook, chose to hit the wall rather than the village Constable's wife and child who were walking along the pavement a foot or two away. I reported this section of pavement as being 43" wide in Item C, Appendix One of Notes attached to my letter to you of 30.1.1962. It has grown no wider in the meantime, and Mrs. Bing and her child are lucky to be alive.

I should be grateful if the Ministry Group would indicate what I am to tell the villagers when they mention road

mf.

HGP/14/42/068

-2-

3.3.1963

safety, and remark that M2 traffic to Dover and Folkestone will funnel through this High Street until a By-Pass is achieved. I have your Minister's original letter on file, in reply to Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., so I should be grateful if in your answer you omit reference to the By-Pass prospects and concentrate on the short-term policy of road safety for this village this year when M2 opens.

I shall quite understand if you delay comment on the points raised until due consideration has been given them, but I would like to point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese.
John Purchese.



M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 3rd. March, 1963

'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

Sir L.M. Thomas, MBE., TD., MP.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

Dear Sir,

With regard to the High Street through Bridge, a subject of representation by you to the Minister of Transport, I have today taken up correspondence once more with the Ministry spokesmen with whom I had previously been in touch.

This was to report that there was a traffic accident in the village a few days ago when a driver smashed down some ten feet of wall narrowly missing a woman and child on the narrow pavement. A photograph was forwarded, together with one showing the Archbishop of Canterbury crossing this section of road only four days before (at the Induction of the new Vicar) with two policemen to see him across the road.

I asked the Ministry officials what road safety measures they proposed to advise in the period when M2 was opened and Bridge without its By-Pass.

I do not feel that this enquiry in any way touches the Minister's answer to your representation, and I will see that you have a copy of the Ministry's answer.

Yours sincerely,


John Purchese.

From: Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

6th March 1963

Dear Mr Purchese

Thank you for your letter of 3rd March.

I shall be interested to read the Minister's reply.

Yours sincerely
Leslie Thomas

John Purchese Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury.



DIVISIONAL ROAD ENGINEER

(METROPOLITAN)

St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telephone: WATERloo 7999 Extn. 3297

Our reference: RDL.34/6T71

Your reference:

5th April, 1963.

Dear Sir,

Trunk Road A.2
Traffic Conditions
Bridge, Near Canterbury, Kent

With reference to your letter dated 3rd March, 1963, addressed to the Secretary of this Department, enclosing two photographs:-

(a) The Archbishop of Canterbury crossing Bridge High Street 16th February, 1963.
(b) A damaged wall due to an accident to a lorry on 20th February, 1963.

You will appreciate that the Archbishop would be similarly escorted across any other traffic route he might officially have to cross, and hence the incident has no specific relevance to conditions in Bridge.

So far as the accident to which you refer is concerned, it is understood that it was due to weather conditions. Snow was falling at the time, and the road covered with snow and ice. No other vehicle was involved

/and

J. Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Mr. Canterbury,
Kent.

This paper is suitable for Dye-line Photocopying

GH/LD.

and there is no indication that traffic conditions are a contributing factor.

As the damaged wall is being reinstated on its original line, the owner has apparently not taken the opportunity to have it set back to increase the width of the footway, which as you state is very narrow at that section.

With regard to short term measures, apart from those minor improvements referred to in the last paragraph of the Minister's letter of 15th November, 1962, replying to Sir Leslie Thomas M.P., the existing kerb lines are to be relaid, and the footpaths resurfaced.

The only effective way of improving matters would be to provide a 24 ft. wide carriageway with 6 ft. wide footways on each side. This could only be done at the expense of demolishing a number of properties, (as indicated by the red line on the enclosed plan), and consequently despoiling the character of the village, which I am sure you would deplore as much as we would.

Yours faithfully,

C. Mawett

for Divisional Road Engineer.



"EVENING STANDARD"

13.4.1963

TWO BRAVE MEN SAVE A VILLAGE

When lorry runs away down hill

Quick thinking by two lorry drivers saved villagers and coach passengers today as one of them went out of control on a steep hill on the A2 London to Dover road near Canterbury. The road was crowded with holiday traffic. and smouldered earth covered the

and spilled earth covered the pavements and the road was blocked.

BUT NO ONE WAS HURT

The foot brake of one of the lorries failed 20 yards from the crest of Bridge Hill as they began to descend in the direction of Canterbury. Half a mile in front of them was the main street of Bridge village.

Village.
All the way down the hill, driver **Mark Andrews**, 28, of Bears End, Godfrey Walk, Ashford, Kent, fought to keep his two-ton lorry laden with six tons of earth under control.

Warning blast

To warn pedestrians and his mate at the wheel of the other lorry in front of him, which was laden with eight tons of earth.

He said later: "When the foot brake failed I changed down into third gear and grabbed the hand brake, but it would not stop the lorry.

"By then I was going so fast that I started to overtake my mate. In Bridge High Street at the foot of the hill I could see a motor coach which had pulled

"I knew that if I hit the coach I would go right through it. So I rammed my mate's lorry. His lorry was pushed into the front of the coach."

‘I hit bus’

The other driver, **Brian Frew**, 24, of Wellesley Villas, Ashford, Kent, said: "He ran into the back of me and swung me round, and I hit the front of the bus."

A car which had been following the motor coach tried to avoid the crash and was in collision with the side of the coach.

Women shoppers screamed and one ran into a garage next door to a grocery shop to escape the lorries as they crashed on their wrong side of the road outside the garage. Broken glass

248/5

Photographed
13.4.1963
11-15 am.



248/6



248/11



M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 15.4.1963

'Rosebank', High Street,

Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

The Secretary,
The Ministry of Transport,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

- for circulation to:-

G. Davis, Esq.,
L. Durrant, Esq.,
F. Samuel, Esq.,
R. Pearson, Esq.,
and G.D. Hewett, Esq. of the
Divisional Road Engineer's Dept., ref: RDL/34/6T71.

Gentlemen,

I am indebted to Mr. G.D. Hewett for acting as Group spokesman in reply to my letter of March 3rd. 1963. He kindly pointed out that the Police escort to the Primate when crossing Bridge High Street was irrelevant, and that with regard to the wall being demolished by a skidding lorry there was no indication that traffic conditions were a contributory factor.

Could I draw the Group's attention to the enclosed photographs taken last Saturday morning (13.4.1963). They show an incident at the southern end of the village High Street involving two 8 ton ballast-laden lorries, a single-decker 'bus belonging to the East Kent Road Car Company, and a private car. No doubt I shall be instructed that this incident is irrelevant and that traffic conditions were not a contributory factor; but I would like the Group to examine carefully photograph No. 248/11 which shows the principally damaged lorry being removed past the new road being constructed to serve Bridge Farm Estate. In view of all these new homes with garages opening directly into the High Street can the Group say that there will be no danger in Bridge after the opening of M2 and before the By-Pass is a fact?

mf

HGP/14/42/068.

-2-

15.4.1963

The only short term policy advanced by Mr. Hewett was to chop away the houses on either side of the High Street, to create trunk road conditions through the centre of the village. I would respectfully submit that this move would merely increase the speed of the traffic and enlarge the dangers.

It could be that traffic lights at each end of the village - allowing one-way working - would impede the traffic, but it would slow it down. Possibly the Ministry Group however, would not wish to expend public funds beyond the example of Gravely on A1, where a notice says: "Please drive slowly through the village".

I have waited 15 months for a direct answer to the report that Mr. R.P. Beddoes (Head of the East Kent Road Car Company) had said: "To my mind there is no doubt that the completion of the Medway Towns Motorway is going to mean heavy additional traffic on the A2 road between London and Dover".

Possibly the Group could now, in consultation, comment directly on this statement and offer a few constructive suggestions as short term measures to ensure road safety in the village of Bridge. I shall quite understand if comment is delayed until due consideration has been given the points raised, but I would point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese
John Purchese.

Enc. Photograph No. 248/5 showing the lengthy skid marks.
Photograph No. 248/8 showing the principally damaged lorry.
Photograph No. 248/7 showing the second damaged lorry.
Photograph No. 248/11 showing the road to Bridge Farm Estate.
(Please refer to letter 2.4.1962 Photograph K in Appended Notes, Addendum 2).

Post-Scriptum.

Thank you for the relaying of kerb-stones and pavements. The work is well in hand.

J.P.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE

15.4.1963

Sir L.M. Thomas, MBE., TD., MP.,
House of Commons,
London. S.W.1

Dear Sir,

I wrote on March 3rd. to say that I was in touch with the Ministry of Transport officials in regard to the short term road safety measures for the village of Bridge. I promised to let you have a copy of their reply, and enclosed you will find this together with a newspaper cutting which I believe will explain my second letter to the Ministry, a copy of which I also enclose.

I am grateful to you for your kind interest in the matter, and I am quite sure that any prodding I can do towards creating safer road conditions through this Village after M2 has been opened will receive your continued interest.

Naturally, any further correspondence received from the Ministry officials will be copied and forwarded to you. You will note a string of names at the commencement of my letter. The reason is that some time or another each of these gentlemen has been given the job of replying to me. Since I hold that each hand of the Ministry should know of its partners moves, I have taken the small precaution of asking for my letter to be circulated to this group - and I refer to them as you will see as the Ministry Group. It overlaps both advisers to the Minister and the Department of the Divisional Road Engineers.

Yours sincerely,

John Purchese.

Enc. Copies of correspondence
and newspaper cutting.

KENTISH GAZETTE: 19.4.1965

A RUNAWAY LORRY ON BRIDGE HILL



Two of the lorries involved in Saturday's "runaway crash" at Bridge





MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telegrams: Transminry, London, Telex
Telephone: WATERloo 7999, ext.

Our reference: HA 234/19/01
Your reference:

18th
April, 1963.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter and enclosures of 15th April to the Secretary about conditions on trunk road A.2 through Bridge. Your letter has been referred to the Divisional Road Engineer, Metropolitan Division, who will be replying to you on completion of enquiries.

Yours faithfully,

D. T. HEWLETT

John Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
CANTERBURY,
Kent.

PPP

From: Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,

London, S.W.1

18th April 1963

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Sir Leslie has gone away for a few days rest after his attack of bronchitis over Easter so I am therefore writing on his behalf to thank you for your letter and enclosures about traffic conditions in Bridge.

I will of course show them to him as soon as he gets back next week.

Yours sincerely,

Personal Secretary

John Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury.



DIVISIONAL ROAD ENGINEER
(METROPOLITAN)
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telephone: WATERLOO 7999 Ext.3297

Our reference: RDL. 34/6T71.
Your reference:

51
May, 1963.

Dear Sir,

Traffic Conditions
Trunk Road A2,
Bridge, near Canterbury, Kent.

Referring to your letter of 15th April, 1963, the first paragraph indicates an apparent misunderstanding of the comments about the two photographs ((a) the Primate, and (b) the wall damaged by a lorry), in the letter sent to you on the 5th April, 1963, to which I would refer you.

The general situation regarding road improvements in this Country as a whole, has been fully explained in the Minister's letter of the 15th November, 1962, to your local Member of Parliament, and while there has been no attempt to dispute that traffic conditions in Bridge are unsatisfactory, it is maintained that they are not unique, and are matched in many other places. There is therefore no specific justification for Bridge to be singled out for special priority.

The most effective short term measure at present, so far as Bridge is concerned, is for you to press the Police to enforce the speed restriction rigorously.

Yours faithfully,

G. R. Hews

for Divisional Road Engineer

J. Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Near Canterbury, Kent.

GDH/JVD

Canterbury Division Conservative and Unionist Association

Parliamentary Representative: SIR LESLIE THOMAS, M.B.E., T.D., M.P.

President Alderman Mrs. G. R. Hews, C.B.E.
Chairman L. E. Hart, Esq., J.P.
Hon. Treasurers U. H. B. Alexander, Esq.
E. Parker, Esq., C.B.E., F.C.A.
Asst. Hon. Treasurer P. T. C. Wright, Esq.

Agent and Secretary E. C. F. Brown
9, Hawks Lane,
Canterbury.
Telephone: Canterbury 4187

7th May, 1963.

Dear Mr. Purchese,

With reference to your appointment with Sir Leslie Thomas on Saturday, 18th May at these offices, I am sorry to inform you that Sir Leslie has been taken ill and won't be able to do interviews on that date or for another month.

I shall be handling this side of his affairs while he is away and if I can help you at all please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

E. C. F. Brown

AGENT & SECRETARY.

John Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank,"
High Street,
BRIDGE,
Canterbury.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 13.7.1963

'Rosebank', High Street,

Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

The Chief Constable of Kent,
County Police H.Q.,
Sutton Road,
Maidstone, Kent.

Dear Sir,

I have been in communication with the Ministry of Transport for more than a year concerning the dangers to pedestrians and drivers alike to be found in the High Street, Bridge, on A2.

The Ministry several times has said that the responsibility for keeping traffic speed down is that of the Police. For example on March 22nd., 1962, Mr. G. Davis for the Ministry said: "With regard to the speed limit signs it is noted that your concern is rather for the observance, by drivers, of the speed limit. Enforcement of this is a matter for the police and does not fall within my Minister's jurisdiction."

Mr. Marples himself, on the subject in a letter to Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., said: "I know that some residents have complained to me about the speed of vehicles through the village. But although I decide about the imposition of a speed limit, it is not my responsibility to enforce it. The recent speed checks by the police are evidence, however, of their determination to do so." (15.11.1962).

The Minister's appreciation of your efforts in this field does not seem to be shared by the Divisional Road Engineer, for whom Mr. G. D. Hewett wrote on May 1st. 1963: "The most effective short term measure at present, so far as Bridge is concerned, is for you to press the Police to enforce the speed restriction rigorously."

This advice was all that the Ministry could offer me when I asked what physical plans they had for the interim period when M2 was completed to Faversham and before the Bridge By-Pass was a reality. This is the period I fear, and the key to my present campaign.

The village Police do an excellent job in stationing themselves at the roadside for hours at a time during peak traffic periods, but this prevents their doing more productive Police work during this time.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 13.7.1963
Continuation.

'Rosebank', High Street,

Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

I have appreciated the way in which your Traffic Division regularly sites its Radar speed check gear in the village.

I regard these attempts on the part of the Ministry to farm out responsibility for what will happen in this village to any other organisation but its own as an example of bureaucratic ineptitude, and have told them so.

If you would care to comment on the Police attitude to the problem of Bridge High Street, I should be most grateful. A copy of this correspondence is being sent to Sir Leslie Thomas to keep him informed of the situation.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese
John Purchese.

A

KENT COUNTY CONSTABULARY
P.O. Box No. 11,
Police Headquarters,
Sutton Road, MAIDSTONE
Our Ref. 104/50/48 HS/GIB 15th. July, 1963.

Dear Sir,
High Street, Bridge, A.2.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 13th. July, 1963.,
which will receive attention.

Yours faithfully,
R. D. LEMON,
Chief Constable of Kent.

5M 5/62 cs1374

20.7.63.

Sir Leslie Thomas was seen in the morning as arranged. Having attempted to suggest that the Police should be tackled, he went on to advise contacting the local authority.

At length he agreed that there was reason for feeling that Bridge had a problem, and he spoke of intending to table a question for the minutes asking for statistics of fatal and non fatal road accidents in Bridge over the past five years.

He would not allow a press photograph to be taken, which would have been published with comment the weekend the second section of the M2 was to be opened.



From: Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.

House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

15th July 1963

Dear Mr Purchese

Thank you for your letter of 13th enclosing copy of one you have sent to the Chief Constable.

I shall be in Canterbury next Saturday morning, at 9 Hawks Lane, and I wonder whether you could come along there for a chat.

Yours sincerely
Leslie Thomas

John Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury.

GO SLOW!

* 3 miles from Canterbury on the Dover Road. You can't miss it!

SUPPORT BRIDGE BY-PASS

John Purchase

'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge.
August 1963

DANGER -

BRIDGE*
MEANS
DANGER -

You are now beginning to experience the heavy traffic caused by the opening of the M2 motorway.

Sir L. M. Thomas, your Member of Parliament, has promised to ask the Minister of Transport a question in the House concerning Bridge High Street and its safety.

You can help by fixing the attached leaflet to your car window, or by handing it to any one of the thousands of car drivers passing through Bridge. Letters to the Ministry should bear the reference HGP/14/42/068.

M2

'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge.

August 1963

Medway Motorway Another Stretch Opens

Another 11 miles of the Medway Motorway will open today (Friday) in time for the pre-Bank Holiday traffic. It will take the motorist of Sittingbourne and will leave only the last 11 miles to Brenley Corner to be completed.

The first 13 miles of the new road were opened by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Ernest Marples) just before Whitsun, bringing traffic from Strood across the Medway Bridge and as far as Stockbury Valley.

This second section will mean that the Motorway will continue from the Stockbury Viaduct to the interchange with the Faversham-Ashford road (A251) just south of Faversham.

Traffic from London will now have to leave the M2 at A251 and rejoin the A2 on the outskirts of Faversham. London-bound traffic from Canterbury and Thanet Way will use the same route.

In a statement announcing the opening of the second section, a Ministry of Transport spokesman says, "At peak periods of holiday pressure, there will be some inconvenience and delay to motorists at this point.

"But Sittingbourne can expect to share at once in the spectacular relief from traffic on which, since Whitsun, the Medway Towns—until this summer one of the worst and longest traffic bottlenecks in Britain—have enjoyed."

The remaining section of the 26-mile Motorway still to be completed runs from the A251 interchange to Brenley Corner, where the M2 merges with Thanet Way and the A2 to Canterbury and Dover.

The Ministry says that work on this section is "well advanced."

Kentish Gazette, July 26, 1963

M2

*
**BRIDGE
MEANS
DANGER -
GO
SLOW!**

* 3 miles from Canterbury on the Dover Road. You can't miss it!

SUPPORT BRIDGE BY-PASS

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, 'ROSEBANK', HIGH ST., BRIDGE, KENT

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 28.7.1963

'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

The Automobile Association,
Fanum House,
Coventry Street,
London, W.1

Dear Sirs,

The opening of the M2 Motorway has brought about a great increase in traffic through the little village of Bridge, which is situated 3 miles south of Canterbury on the Dover and Folkestone road. The threat of increased traffic was seen some time ago, and the Minister of Transport has promised a by-pass in due course.

The situation at the moment however is one giving concern, and the Ministry of Transport have been quite unable or unwilling to give any help in the problem of slowing down traffic through the narrow High Street, which has been the subject of two broadcasts by the B.B.C. "Town and Country" programme.

As both a member of the A.A. (K147564B7), and as organiser of the campaign to wake up the Ministry to its responsibilities, can I ask one thing of the Automobile Association? There have this weekend, by Sunday mid-morning, been three accidents in the High Road involving vehicles, in one case severe injuries were caused. The Ministry will not sign-post the road as dangerous. Would the A.A. put signs up at each end of the village, at the top of the hill leading to the village in each case, saying something along the lines of "DANGER AHEAD - narrow village street". I have in mind that next weekend in Britain is a Bank Holiday, and traffic will be increased even more, and many people will be trying the M2-A2 route to Dover for the first time for years.

If you want to contact the Ministry, telephone WATERloo 7999, asking for Mr. G. Davis or Mr. L. Durrant who have knowledge of the situation here. The Chief Constable of Kent, Mr. R.D. Lemon at Maidstone, is also well aware of the situation.

Yours sincerely,

Purchese
John Purchese.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 28.7.1963

'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

The Secretary,
The Ministry of Transport,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

- for circulation to:-

G. Davis, Esq.,
L. Durrant, Esq.,
F. Samuel, Esq.,
R. Pearson, Esq.,
and G.D. Hewett, Esq., of the
Divisional Road Engineer's Dept., ref: RDL/34/6T71.

Gentlemen,

I am again indebted to Mr. G.D. Hewett for acting as Group spokesman, in reply to my letter of April 15th., 1963. My delay in taking up his answer is purely due to my having been in Kenya for a time, and I apologise for keeping the Group waiting.

You say, Gentlemen, that the most effective short term measure at present, so far as Bridge is concerned, is for me to press the Police to enforce the speed restriction rigorously. I have communicated your short term measure to the Chief Constable of Kent, Mr. R.D. Lemon, of P.O. Box No. 11, Police Headquarters, Sutton Road, Maidstone; and am awaiting his reply with interest. Naturally, I shall ensure that you hear his views.

Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., granted me an interview last week, and I believe that he is now aware of the situation in Bridge, and intends to ask your Minister a question in the House.

The opening of the second section of M2 this weekend has resulted in greatly increased traffic through Bridge, with three accidents involving vehicles up to 11.0 a.m. on Sunday morning, one with serious injury involved. Possibly in view of this, the Group would apply itself a little longer to the interim problem of Bridge High Street, and favour me with some constructive suggestions. I shall quite understand if comment is delayed until due consideration has been given the points raised, but I would point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness - as I believe I have said before.

Yours faithfully,

Enc. New pamphlet.

Purchese
John Purchese.

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 29.7.1963

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

* The District Organiser,
Transport & General Workers Union,
1, Woodville Road,
Maidstone, Kent.

Dear Sir,

Your members must have found the opening of the M2 motorway a great convenience after the drag through the Medway Towns that used to be their lot - and the road is to be applauded on that score. However, the improvement of one section of road sometimes brings great strain on another section, and this is true of the village of Bridge, 3 miles south of Canterbury. We are here experiencing a flood of traffic, especially heavy goods, that has surprised even those campaigning for road improvement. There is a narrow High Street, with houses opening straight on to the road, and pavements where two people cannot walk abreast - this at the end of a hill in each direction. You can imagine the concern of local people.

I well know that Unions circularise their Shops with information from time to time, and I am wondering if the wording of the enclosed pamphlet could be copied into such a general bulletin. It is, after all, in the drivers' interests to know of these danger spots. I have been badgering the Ministry of Transport for over a year, knowing that the M2 would bring this heavy and dangerous traffic. There were three accidents with vehicles, one serious, during the past week-end.

As a Shop-Steward myself, in the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians, affiliated to the T.U.C., I know that I do not ask in vain when I put this matter to you. Lives are at stake, those of the villagers - and your members.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,

Purchese.
John Purchese.

* Mr. E. J. Burke
Road Transport Commercial District Officer.



THE AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

TELEPHONE
WHITEHALL 1200
EXT. N°345

FANUM HOUSE
LEICESTER SQUARE
LONDON, W.C.2

PLEASE QUOTE
REFERENCE
HY/CGS/SBS

John Purchese Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent

31st July 1963

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of the 28th July from which we have noted the observations you have made on the effect which traffic has had on the village of Bridge, following the opening of the M.2 motorway.

The Association's authority for the erection of traffic signs is however limited to the provision of temporary signs only, for short periods, on occasions such as special events which necessitate the particular direction of traffic, and diversions of traffic as a result of road repairs, etc. It is very much regretted therefore that we are unable to help you in the manner you desire, since the provision of permanent traffic signs is a matter for the appropriate highway authority.

We will however take the opportunity of passing your communication to the Area Secretary at our Maidstone Office, who is responsible for all our local affairs in Kent, in order that he may be aware of the conditions to which you refer.

Yours faithfully,

C. Godfrey Smith
C. Godfrey Smith,
for Manager, Highways Dept.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST MOTORING ORGANISATION

KENT COUNTY CONSTABULARY

All Official Communications should be addressed to "The Chief Constable of Kent."

TELEX No. 89132

MAIDSTONE 4781

EXT. No. 331.

REF. No. 104/50/48.

YOUR REF. HGP-14-068.



P.O. BOX No. 11,
SUTTON ROAD,
MAIDSTONE

1st August, 1963.

Dear Sir,

Traffic Conditions, High Street,
(A.2 Bridge).

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 13th July, 1963, the contents of which are noted.

The problem at Bridge, of course, is well known to the police, and is one common to many of the villages in the county where a heavy trafficked main road passes through the centre of a village with the resultant dangers, and the only satisfactory solution can be the provision of a by-pass.

So far as cases of speeding are concerned I assure you that my officers give as much attention as possible to the section of the A.2 trunk road through Bridge and this will continue to be done.

Yours faithfully,

H. Self Suff.
for Chief Constable of Kent.

Mr. J. Purchese,
'Rosebank',
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury,
Kent.

M.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1

Telegrams: Transminry, London, Telex

Telephone: WATERLOO 7999, ext.

Our reference: HGP 14/42/068

Your reference:

2 August, 1963

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 27th July about the traffic conditions at Bridge.

It is noted that you have spoken to Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P. on the same subject. The Minister has now received a letter from Sir Leslie, about Bridge, and he will be replying to him as soon as possible. In these circumstances it is assumed that Sir Leslie may wish to inform you himself of the outcome.

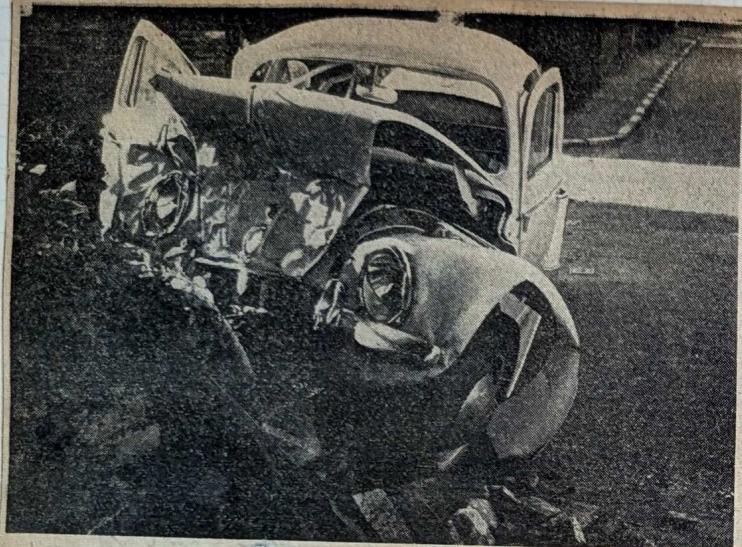
Yours faithfully,

R. Pearson

(R. A. Pearson)

John Purchese Esq.
'Rosebank',
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury,
Kent.

This paper is suitable for Dyeline Photocopying



Crashed Into Wall

Kentish Gazette, August 2, 1963

Motorist In Hospital

Early on Sunday morning a car driven by Edwin B. Crook, of Bredley Lodge, Boughton, crashed—from what cause is unknown—into a wall at the junction of High Street and Conyngham Lane, Bridge. The car was considerably damaged and the driver was taken to the Kent and Canterbury Hospital and detained with a dislocated right hip, cuts, bruises and shock.

Through The Churchyard

In regard to the possibility of a right-of-way being established through Bridge Churchyard to the entrance to Bourne Park, to avoid the present danger to pedestrians on Bridge Hill, where there was no pavement, it was reported that the Vicar and P.C.C. were sympathetic and were prepared to consider indicating a right-of-way, provided no expense fell upon them.

Cllr. G. S. Cobbett asked if the work could be carried out before the start of the autumn term in view of the fact that, with reduced school bus facilities, more children would be endangered when coming from the Bourne Park entrance.

The Clerk said that no promise could be made as there were certain procedures to be carried out but, as far as his office was concerned, the matter would be expedited.

Danger Corner

Silence

Since no further information has been forthcoming from the Ministry of Transport concerning the proposed Bridge by-pass, the Clerk has been instructed to press for a reply.

Danger For Passengers

Kent Herald, 7.8.1963

BRIDGE MEANS DANGER

The dangers of the A2 at the village of Bridge may be the subject of a question in the House of Commons, says Mr. J. Purchese, who is campaigning for the construction of the village by-pass to be expedited.

Mr. Purchese said this week that Canterbury's M.P., Sir Leslie Thomas, had promised to put a question to the House and that he had also promised full support.

Meanwhile, Mr. Purchese is continuing his campaign for improvements to the A2 and for an alternative route.

He is organising the distribution of pamphlets which say "BRIDGE MEANS DANGER—GO SLOW" to every house in the village, and is giving out car-stickers.

Already he has written to the Transport and General Workers' Union protesting against the amount of heavy goods traffic which goes through the village, and also to the Automobile Association asking for "Danger" signs to be erected.

The campaign has been in progress for some time, but as yet has achieved no tangible result. "But," says Mr. Purchese, "the campaign is by no means dead."



Motorists travelling through Bridge towards London saw this warning this week. Its appearance was a mystery.

26.9. '63
Kentish
Gazette.

Kentish Gazette, September 27, 1963

Kentish Gazette, October 4, 1963

"BRIDGE—PEOPLE LIVE HERE"

To the Editor,

Bridge village is expanding—more houses; more children; more old people; more cars; more accidents? If all near-misses and minor accidents, as well as the more serious ones, became news, the total would indeed be really alarming, and greater pressure applied for positive action.

DOUGLAS A. LEWIS.
1 Weston Villas,
Bridge.

BRIDGE SPLIT OVER FILLING STATION

Petitions Clash At Inquiry

THE villagers of Bridge are split in their feelings over a new petrol filling station in the High Street. Some 82 have signed a petition in favour of the filling station. But a further 75 have signed a petition against it, warning of the traffic hazards in the village.

The two petitions came into conflict on Wednesday at the Bridge-Blean Rural District Council offices, Canterbury.

Not Open

"It is very awkward for people to fill up there—and he is not open on Saturday afternoons and Sundays."

"People run out of petrol in the village—and they do quite often—and it has to be brought from Canterbury."

At weekends, he said, people who lived in Bisham, Beksbourne and Patrixbourne had to go six to eight miles for petrol.

He estimated that by the time the proposed housing development was finished, the population of Bridge would be doubled.

The Council proposed to develop 10 acres of land. Traffic from this site would use the applicant's road, rather than Mill Lane, which was very narrow.

It was thought that the future traffic would be using the broad Bridge Farm Estate road.

"One of the reasons for saying this is an excellent idea is that local traffic will be able to fill up before coming on to the main road," he said.

Condemned

The site involved the demolition of some 150-200-year-old picturesque cottages. But these had been condemned as unfit for habitation and would have to be demolished in any case.

A petition signed by 82 people had been addressed to the Minister of Transport expressing the need for further filling facilities in Bridge.

Mr. Schoefeld said that it was also proposed to build shops on the other side of the estate across road.

"People can live here, shop here and fill up with petrol here—and only once, at the conclusion of all this—need they de-bauch on to the main road. This is highly desirable from a traffic point of view."

Chairman of Bridge Parish Council, Mr. Herbert T. Price, of Linton Cottage, Bridge, said that plans had come before his Council and it had decided unanimously that this filling station was a desirable asset.

"It is a thing the village needs badly," he said.

"The village street is very narrow and motorists cannot pull off it when filling at Mr. Rogers' garage."

"We would be quite happy to have any restrictions on signs that the authorities see fit in the interests of the village's scenic appearance," he said.

"I would rather lose this appeal than put up a filling station unworthy of the village."

Good Design

Mr. J. G. Baker, Divisional Planning Officer of the K.C.C., said he felt Mr. Paine had made the best of a bad job. As a petrol filling station, he had made a good design.

But the objection of the K.C.C. and his own personal opinion was that this point of the village was not the right place for a petrol filling station—whichever the designer might be.

The best use of the site, he thought, would be for housing, although he was not against some shops on the site.

The Minister of Transport had directed that planning permission should be refused because it would increase traffic hazards.

The Kent County Council was refusing permission because it thought a further petrol filling station would be harmful to Bridge's appearance and that there was no overriding need for one.

Bridge was set in an area designated as one of great landscape value and which the National Parks Commission would be shortly designating as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

It was an attractive village, with many High Street buildings included in the Minister of Housing and Local Government's provisional list of buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

"In my opinion, the intrusion of a new petrol filling station into the heart of this pleasant village street scene cannot fail to cause serious harm to its appearance," he said. "A petrol filling station would have a very different effect on the village street picture from shops and houses and is not visually acceptable."

Planning permission had been given to the owner of the filling station in the village to demolish Farrington House so that a forecourt could be provided. This would improve the facilities without making such an impression on the village street picture, as would the creation of an entirely new station.

Bridge was less than three miles from the centre of Canterbury, where there were numerous garages and filling stations. There were other facilities at Barham, and he could see no real need for an additional station at Bridge.

He pointed out that the Minister had previously dismissed two appeals for planning permission for filling stations—one a half-mile on the Canterbury side of the applicant's site and another near the Red Lion public house. Both were dismissed.

He urged that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mr. Geoffrey D. Hewett, of the K.C.C.'s Divisional Road En-

gineer's Department, said that any accesses on to roads were potential dangers, because emerging vehicles and those turning in must interrupt the free flow of through traffic.

In the present case, there were two narrow accesses close to one another joining a traffic route of sub-standard width. This would aggravate the already unsatisfactory traffic conditions in the village.

In the 1961 traffic census, it was found that over 6,300 vehicles passed through the village each day—in the peak periods this rose to 6,700. This indicated a need for a three-line carriageway, whereas the present road was only 18 feet wide and grossly overloaded. It was probably worse now.

The only independent objector was Mr. A. W. Rogers, proprietor of the one petrol filling station in the village.

"I don't think there is any need for another filling station," he said. "It is very, very rare that people run out—and then it is their own silly fault," he said.

After the hearing, the Minister of Housing and Local Government's Inspector went to visit the site and his decision will be made known later.

BRIDGE BY-PASS FOR OUR SAKE & YOURS!

FOR ACTION, WRITE:

The Sec., Ministry of Transport,

Southwark St., London, S.E.1

SAFETY FOR BRIDGE !

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, ROSEBANK HIGH ST. BRIDGE

ISSUED : 12.10.'63 on March.





Here's how the youngsters of Bridge slowed down traffic in the village on Sunday—and put forward their plea for a by-pass.

Kentish Gazette 13.10.63 → cont

Young ones fight for village safety

The young people of Bridge have taken the lead to get a by-pass for the village. They are organising a campaign to bring the dangers of speeding traffic to the notice of the Minister of Transport.

Bridge lies on the busy A2 London to Dover road, just south of Canterbury. The half-timbered houses nestle between two steep hills.

Cars coming from and on their way to the Continental ferries at Dover pass through the village's narrow main street and there have been many accidents.

Says 20-year-old Brian Lewis, organiser of the campaign: "We felt it was time we had a say in the matter. Many of us have had near accidents and we thought it was time our protest was heard."

"More and more traffic is

EVENING STANDARD, MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1963 - 21

Teenagers march for safer road

Fifty teenagers marched through the village of Bridge, on the Canterbury to Dover road yesterday protesting against the speed of traffic.

Their organiser, 20-year-old Brian Lewis, said: "We want a by-pass. But the Ministry of Transport won't take any notice until the corpses are laid out in front of it."

Daily Express. 14.10.63



Organiser, 20-year-old Brian Lewis, hands round "Go Slow" leaflets to the marchers.

TEENAGERS IN PROTEST MARCH

Bridge Traffic Problem

Over 35 teenagers went on a protest march through the busy village of Bridge on Sunday afternoon. They carried banners protesting against the speed of traffic through the village. And they handed out "go slow" leaflets to the motorists who were forced to crawl behind the procession.

Kentish Gazette
13.10.63

Proclaimed the banners, "Bridge by-pass for our safety and yours," "Help save lives by supporting by-pass campaign" and "Slow through Bridge."

The youngsters were mainly members of Bridge Youth Club, aged between 13 and 19—and their progress through the main street was hampered by Mr. John Purchese, who has been leading his own campaign for a by-pass for some time.

Said Mr. Purchese, "This is nothing to do with me. The youngsters decided to do it themselves—and I am delighted."

"Since the M2 opened, the situation has worsened. There is much more traffic using this road."

The Organiser

The protest march was organised by 20-year-old Brian Lewis, of 1 Weston Villas, Bridge. His father is a Bridge-Blean Rural District councillor.

"I thought it was about time the young people of Bridge had a say in the matter," he told the *Kentish Gazette*.

"We want to know what is happening to make the village safer. The Police have done their best and are still doing everything that they can to prevent traffic speeding through the village. The sight of a policeman standing beside the road is often enough to 'slow down' drivers."

"The Police cannot be on duty 24 hours a day."

Mr. Lewis said that there had been many accidents and near accidents that had not been reported. Minor accidents were not recorded by the authorities. He had been nearly killed himself.

He had been interested in this problem for about two years," he said. "I have written several letters to the Ministry of Transport and to newspapers."

"When you have a down and an up gradient like we do here in Bridge, you are bound to get speeding vehicles."

Not Wide Enough

Mr. Lewis said that the A2 was carrying considerably more traffic now than much of the A20 traffic was being diverted by the opening of the M2.

"The road just isn't wide enough to take the heavy lorries and cars with which we are confronted."

Mr. Lewis said that others involved in getting the protest march organised included Stuart Dove (17), of Meadow Croft, Conyngham Lane, John Harris (18), of Regency Cottage, and his own brother, Nigel Lewis (17).

"We want a by-pass," he said. "But it seems that the Ministry of Transport won't act until the corpses are laid out in front of them."

Young villagers stage danger protest march

FIFTY young people, carrying banners, marched through their home village of Bridge on Sunday, protesting against the dangers to villagers from motorists who pass through on the A2 to Dover.

Residents of the rapidly-growing village, three miles east of Canterbury, are getting more worried about traffic speeding through the narrow, winding main street.

"But we haven't heard any more about it," says 20-year-old Brian Lewis, who was responsible for Sunday's march.

He lives at Weston-villas, which is on a bend in the centre of the village.

"The remedy? A by-pass. This will allow the village to revert to the quiet hamlet the heavy beams and narrow lanes characterise.

A petition organised by the young people in Bridge a short time ago now uses the motorway because two-thirds of the distance is a dual carriageway.

"That means the volume of traffic through Bridge

Bridge wants a by-pass

has increased tremendously.

And the road through the village is just not wide enough to cope, particularly with heavy lorries.

The danger must have increased because the police are always setting up radar traps here.

Continental traffic is increasing all the time, and if the Channel tunnel is built, more industry will come down."

Mr. Lewis could think of several accidents which he considers could have been avoided—lorries crashing and cars hitting the walls flanking the main street.

"One of the people on the march—John Baker—was recently hit by a car when he was walking along the pavement."

"If nothing is done soon we are obviously going to have a serious big accident."

Kentish Express 13.10.63

TEENAGERS' TRAFFIC PROTEST



At the week-end, teenagers at Bridge had already been carried a stage further by a meeting between representatives of the police, highways and education authorities on the site.

The meeting, it was reported to the monthly meeting of the local joint education committee, was unable to recommend a school crossing patrol at the junc-

tion of Bourne Park Road, but suggested a patrol at what was considered a more central point, just north of the Plough and Harrow public house.

The meeting resolved that the authorities concerned be requested to re-examine the position in the light of further information. Members expressed their intention of observing local conditions for themselves.

The matter had been made all the more pressing by the decision to cease conveying some Bishopsbourne children living within the statutory walking distance of Bridge Church of England primary school.

Attempts to remedy the traffic dangers on the A2

Kent Messenger 18.10.63.

Kentish Gazette, November 8, 1963

9

NO PETROL FILLING STATION FOR BRIDGE

Minister's Decision

Bridge will not be having a petrol filling station in its main street after all. The Minister of Housing and Local Government has upheld the Kent County Council's refusal of planning permission.

A public inquiry was held on October 8, when Village Properties Ltd. appealed against the K.C.C.'s refusal of planning permission to build a petrol filling station at the entrance of the new estate.

The Inspector (Mr. S. H. A. Rollison), in his report to the Minister, concluded that the suggested layout and design of the filling station were good. They would not materially harm the appearance of Bridge High Street.

He accepted evidence given by the appellants that the proposed station could operate without there being too many signs and clutter and that control would be exercised over this.

However, the report goes on, the trunk road through Bridge was far too narrow to cope adequately with present traffic—much of which was of a commercial nature—and which was likely to increase.

The Inspector accepted that there was a growing local need for a modern petrol filling station, but he considered that this site was not the proper place for it. The need did not justify overriding the objection to the development on traffic grounds.

The Minister accepted his Inspector's recommendations and consequently dismissed the appeal.

WHAT ABOUT YOU!

A responsible job - see overleaf.

Distributed 8.12.1963

TEENAGERS' TRAFFIC PROTEST



At the week-end, teenagers at Bridge paraded the High Street with banners calling attention to the need for a by-pass to relieve traffic conditions in the village.

Attempts to remedy the traffic dangers on the A2

had already been carried a stage further by a meeting between representatives of the police, highways and education authorities on the site.

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The Minister accepted his Inspector's recommendations and consequently dismissed the appeal.

WANTED

A man or woman to act as School Crossing Patrol, in Bridge High Street by the Plough and Harrow, to see the children safely over the road.

Hours: 8.30 — 9.00 a.m.

3.40 — 4.00 p.m.

Wages: 4/- per hour of service.

Interested persons should contact

The Headmistress, Mrs. O. I. Knight,
Bridge & Patrixbourne C. E. Primary School,
Patrixbourne Rd., Bridge.

Distributed 8-12-1963

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 8. 12. 1963

'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

The Chairman,
The Isle of Thanet Divisional
Labour Party,
42, Hawley Square,
Margate, Kent.

Dear Sir,

The dangers to motorist and pedestrian alike in Bridge High Street are common knowledge. There has been a campaign for some time to reduce the accident potential of this narrow street carrying more than 6,700 vehicles a day, and the Ministry of Transport is aware both of the danger and the campaign.

I am writing to your Party, as I am to the other two main political groups, to ask if your Committee would be so good as to formulate a brief (300 words) statement of your intentions in this matter should your Party be returned to power in the forthcoming General Election. The statements would be printed in folder form much as the enclosed example, but without comment from me other than the explanation on the front that these statements are official policy lines of the parties quoted. I anticipate asking for a similar statement from candidates after nomination papers have been entered.

I should add that one prospective Party candidate has already agreed to these publications, so I look forward with interest to receiving your comments. Dead-line for copy is Saturday January 18th., 1964.

Yours sincerely,

John Purchese.
John Purchese.

P.S. Mr. G.S. Cobbett knows of this matter, and has made great efforts locally to improve the situation.

Canterbury Division Conservative and Unionist Association

Parliamentary Representative: SIR LESLIE THOMAS, M.B.E., T.D., M.P.

President Alderman Mrs. G. R. Hews, C.B.E.
Chairman L. E. Hart, Esq., J.P.
Hon. Treasurers U. H. B. Alexander, Esq.
E. Parker, Esq., C.B.E., F.C.A.
Asst. Hon. Treasurer P. T. C. Wright, Esq.

Agent and Secretary E. C. F. Brown
9, Hawks Lane,
Canterbury.

Telephone: Canterbury 4187

9th December, 1963.

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Thank you for your letter of the 8th December addressed to my Chairman in which you ask for a statement from my Association of its intentions regarding a by-pass for Bridge in the event of the Conservative party being successful at the next General Election. At the same time you enclose a folder in which you commit us to providing such a statement and I presume that folder has already been distributed. I really think I must protest at this method of conducting your campaign. No local political Association can detail its party's intention on a Bridge By-pass. They are just not in a position to do so. The only person who can give any authoritative answer is the Minister of Transport of the day and he, unless such a by-pass is included in his programme for the next three years, cannot give any definite promise.

I am sending a copy of your letter, together with the folder, on to Sir Leslie Thomas who, no doubt, will reply to you direct. I am also sending a copy of it to the Chairman of my Association.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Brown.

AGENT & SECRETARY.

J. Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank,"
High Street,
BRIDGE,
Nr. Canterbury.

August, 1963.

As promised by my Private Secretary on 8th August I can now reply to your letter of 23rd July in which you asked me to let you have some statistics of road accidents at the Village of Bridge, near Canterbury.

During the five years between 1st July 1958 and 30th June 1963 a total of twenty accidents involving personal injury were reported. These caused five fatalities, nine cases of serious injury and nineteen persons were slightly hurt.

Yours sincerely,

S. O. GALBRAITH

Sir Leslie Thomas, M.B.E., T.D., M.P.

GM



Photo by B. PEARSON, BRIDGE.

Bridge annoyed with K.E.C. "meanness"

VILLAGERS at Bridge, near Canterbury — an accident black spot on the A2 — are annoyed with the Kent Education Committee over a "mean" scheme for a school crossing patrol.

The villages have been campaigning for years for safety measures, and were relieved to hear that the committee was at last to employ a school crossing patrol.

But they are upset at the very low wages offered for a job with such responsibilities.

The committee has put up notices in two shops in the village asking for a man or a woman to act as a school crossing patrol. The wages work out at 3s. 4d. per day.

Scores of children have to cross the road to school as motorists tear through at up to 60 m.p.h.

There is a 30 m.p.h. limit, which many drivers ignore. Seven people, children among them, have been killed in the post-war years.

Parents have campaigned for safety measures and for a by-pass. The police have stepped up prosecutions for speeding.

The adverts say that a patrol is wanted from 8.30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 3.40 to 4 p.m. "Wages 4s. per hour of service. Applications to the headmistress of the village school."

Mr. James Smith, road safety officer to Bridge-Blean Rural Council, who lives in High Street, Bridge, told a KENT MESSENGER reporter: "I think it's disgusting. It really is a wicked business. The education authorities should be ashamed."

I myself saw two of the seven people killed. For such a low salary, about 3s. 4d. a day, they will not get anyone physically capable of doing it. It's not a job for a pensioner. The traffic is too quick. No young person is going to take the job on at that salary", said Mr. Smith.

A spokesman for the Kent Education Committee at Canterbury said: "Four shillings per hour is the standard rate throughout the county. We pay them half-pay during holidays, and they get 1s. 6d. per week towards laundry expenses."

Kent Messenger 20.12.63

Road Safety is everyone's job:

For action, write:-

*The Sec., The Ministry of Transport,
Southwark St., S.E. 1*

* 1964 will be General Election year. For the Electorate's benefit a leaflet will shortly appear, detailing each Party's official proposals for Bridge High Street road safety.

Conservative, Liberal and Labour statements will appear.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, ROSEBANK HIGH ST, BRIDGE

Sir Leslie Thomas, M.B.E., T.D., M.P.

CM

To wish you a happy Christmas

and a peaceful New Year

John Purchase

"ROSEBANK", HIGH STREET, BRIDGE, CANTERBURY, KENT.

Bridge annoyed with K.E.C. "meanness"

VILLAGERS at Bridge, near Canterbury — an accident black spot on the A2 — are annoyed with the Kent Education Committee over a "mean" scheme for a school crossing patrol.

The villages have been campaigning for years for safety measures, and were relieved to hear that the committee was at last to employ a school crossing patrol. The wages

But they are upset at the very low wages offered for a job with such responsibilities. The committee has put up notices in two shops in the village asking for a man or a woman to act as a school crossing patrol. The wages work out at 3s. 4d. per day.

Scores of children have to cross the road to school as motorists tear through at up to 60 m.p.h.

There is a 30 m.p.h. limit, which many drivers ignore. Seven people, children among them, have been killed in the post-war years.

Parents have campaigned for safety measures and for a by-pass. The police have stepped up prosecutions for speeding.

The adverts say that a patrol is wanted from 8.30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 3.40 to 4 p.m. "Wages 4s. per hour of service. Applications to the headmistress of the village school."

Mr. James Smith, road safety officer to Bridge-Blean Rural Council, who lives in High Street, Bridge, told a KENT MESSENGER reporter: "I think it's disgusting. It really is a wicked business. The education authorities should be ashamed."

"I myself saw two of the seven people killed. For such a low salary, about 3s. 4d. a day, they will not get anyone physically capable of doing it. It's not a job for a pensioner. The traffic is too quick. No young person is going to take the job on at that salary", said Mr. Smith.

A spokesman for the Kent Education Committee at Canterbury said "Four shillings per hour is the standard rate throughout the county. We pay them half-pay during holidays, and they get 1s. 6d. per week towards laundry expenses."

Kent Messenger 20.12.63

From: Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

23rd December 1963

Dear Mr. Purchese

cc: 7a

Mr. Brown has forwarded to me a letter you have addressed to the Chairman regarding your By-Pass campaign and I have noted the postscript regarding the Parliamentary Question.

In fact I did communicate with the Minister and I did, after some time, get a reply. I was under the impression that this reply had been forwarded to you but unfortunately neither my Secretary nor I can find any trace of an acknowledgement or its despatch. I have therefore obtained a copy from the Ministry which I enclose.

Yours truly
Leslie Thomas

J. Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury.

for enclosure, see one page back

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 28.12.1963

'Rosebank', High Street,

Bridge, Canterbury, Kent.

Bridge 485

Sir L. M. Thomas, MBE., TD., MP.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated 23.12.1963, in which your reference to the Parliamentary Question concerning Bridge mentioned that you had been in touch with the Minister. You kindly enclosed a photostat of the reply, in which Mr. G.D. Galbraith listed five fatalities, nine cases of serious injury and nineteen minor personal accidents in the period 1.7.1958 to 30.6.1963 in a total of twenty incidents. I am much obliged to you for having elicited this information, and I am sure that the secondary purpose of your question did not go unnoticed by the Ministry.

An interesting comment by a Ministry spokesman that may have escaped you is the following passage from a statement made on October 9th. 1963 at a hearing held by the Bridge-Blean RDC. concerning a new petrol-filling station in Bridge High Street:-

"Mr. Geoffrey D. Hewett, of the K.C.C.'s Divisional Road Engineer's Department, said that...in the 1961 traffic census, it was found that over 6,300 vehicles passed through the village each day - in the peak periods this rose to 6,700. This indicated a need for a three-line carriageway, whereas the present road was only 18 feet wide and grossly overloaded. It was probably worse now." (Kentish Gazette report: 11.11.'63).

Mr. G.D. Hewett is a member of the Ministry Group who have assured me over the past two years that Bridge is not dangerous.

Yours sincerely,

John Purchese.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 28.12.1963

Agent & Secretary,
Canterbury Division Conservative
and Unionist Association,
9, Hawks Lane,
Canterbury.

Dear Mr. Brown,

Thank you for your letter of the 9th. December.
I delayed my reply until I had heard from Sir Leslie Thomas in case any
point made in his letter should affect the issue.

I note that you forwarded a copy of my previous
letter to the Chairman of your Association. Should you need a further
copy of the leaflet enclosed with my letter I should be pleased to let
you have it.

I should explain that in that letter I was not
asking your Association to detail its intention about a By-Pass for
Bridge, but possibly to detail its suggestions for the reduction of the
accident potential of this narrow street. This is a local issue,
and one I feel well within the competence of a Divisional Association.

Possibly this explanation will assist; coupled
with my assurance that I am approaching your Association in the same way
as I have, for example, asked the Road Transport Commercial District
Officer of the Transport and General Workers Union to publicise to his
members the dangers of bringing heavy goods carrying vehicles into the
village both for the general good and for his members' safety.

I am sure that you would agree after the
appalling road casualty figures over the Christmas Holiday period that
anything that can be done, or anyone that can be harnessed to reduce this
toll serves a public need.

I am grateful to Sir Leslie Thomas for having
pursued his question to the Minister, and I look forward with interest
to hearing your further comments. One Party has already supplied copy
for my leaflet, a second Party is preparing it; I am sure you consider
this local issue worth while.

Yours sincerely,

Purchese.
John Purchese.

M2

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF. HGP-14-42-068

DATE. 28.12.1963

'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge, Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

The Secretary,
The Ministry of Transport,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

- for circulation to:-

G. Davis, Esq.,
L. Durrant, Esq.,
F. Samuel, Esq.,
R. Pearson, Esq.,
and G.D. Hewett, Esq of the
Divisional Road Engineer's Dept. ref: RDL/34/6T71.

Gentlemen,

I would like to thank Mr. R.A. Pearson
for acknowledging my last letter, and for pointing out that the Minister
had received a letter from Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., to which a reply
was shortly anticipated, and that reply would doubtless reach me through
the good offices of Sir Leslie. I received the reply yesterday, and
would like to thank the Minister through the appropriate chain of
command for supplying the valuable statistics regarding road accidents
in Bridge over the past five year period.

I have noticed with interest that one of
the Ministry Group, Mr. G.D. Hewett, was quoted as saying "In the 1961
traffic census, it was found that over 6,300 vehicles passed through
the village each day - in the peak periods this rose to 6,700. This
indicated the need for a three-line carriageway, whereas the present
road was only 18 feet wide and grossly overloaded. It was probably
worse now." ("Kentish Gazette", 11.11.1963 An Inquiry over a new
petrol filling station in Bridge High Street.)

I would imagine this report to be accurate.
Possibly the Group will examine the words "grossly overloaded" and
"probably worse now" with care, and apply itself a little longer to the
interim problem and favour me with some constructive suggestions.
I shall quite understand if comment is delayed until due consideration
has been given the points raised, but I would point out that events have
a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,

Enc. A new pamphlet.

Purchese.
John Purchese.

KEEPING DEATH OFF HIGH STREET

VILLAGERS FIGHT FOR A BY-PASS

The Politicians' Views

PEOPLE willing to take part in protest marches are being recruited in Bridge. This is the latest step forward in the villagers' fight to secure a by-pass for their village.

This week hundreds of leaflets and pre-paid postcards will be delivered to Bridge people. The postcard asks if they are willing to take an active interest in the campaign to make Bridge safer by taking part in protest marches and other activities.

With the postcard goes a leaflet setting out the views of three political parties on the safety of Bridge.

Conservative

Says Sir Leslie Thomas, Conservative M.P. for Canterbury:

"The problem of the density of traffic passing Bridge High Street is not a small local issue. It is part and parcel of the need to bring the whole of the London to Dover road to motorway standards."

"What concerns us most is whether a simple 'ring' by-pass round Bridge will solve the fundamental problem. If Bridge is throttling the route to the Continent, then what is Canterbury itself doing? We are strongly in favour of extending the M2 south of Bridge as soon as possible."

"This would alleviate the problem of traffic in the village High Street, but would seriously interfere with valuable agricultural and horticultural holdings. The Ministry are also considering a wider by-pass of Canterbury which would join with A22 to Lydden. Both these schemes would help the local needs of Bridge."

The Minister of Transport is present trying to reach a deal with the French Government on a Channel Tunnel. Once this is resolved he can consider the future road scheme. We believe that whatever decision may be it will still be necessary to extend M2 to Dover, and shall continue to press for this to be done as quickly as possible."

Liberal

The Liberal comment comes from Mr. J. H. Stewart, chairman of the Canterbury Division Liberal Association, who says:

"No one in his senses could deny that a tiny village sitting astride the main artery to the Continent is a 19th Century anachronism. Couple this with its geographical situation in the trough between two hills with vehicular traffic in either direction accelerating through its narrow street in order to gain momentum to climb the hill on the opposite side, and it is obvious that the by-pass is not so much a question of 'if' as 'when'."

"What concerns us most is whether a simple 'ring' by-pass round Bridge will solve the fundamental problem. If Bridge is throttling the route to the Continent, then what is Canterbury itself doing? We are strongly in favour of extending the M2/A2 at Brenley Corner, cutting through South Canterbury and by-passing Bridge on the northern side of the village.

"This would alleviate the problem of traffic in the village High Street, but would seriously interfere with valuable agricultural and horticultural holdings. The Ministry are also considering a wider by-pass of Canterbury which would join with A22 to Lydden. Both these schemes would help the local needs of Bridge."

"Quite apart from the question of the safety of the people of Bridge, it is clearly in the national interest that communication between this country and Europe should be as free and as unimpeded as modern technology can make it."

Labour

The Labour point is put by Cllr. George Cobbett, prospective Parliamentary candidate for the Canterbury Constituency:

Residents unite in demanding by-pass for Bridge

THE battle to keep death off the road in the High Street of old-world Bridge, near Canterbury, was taken a step closer to the people on Monday.

Cars roar through this accident black-spot on their way to the Channel ports, often at speeds up to 60 m.p.h. The limit in the village is 30 m.p.h.

The first of 500 yellow leaflets went out with BRIDGE as the title, below it a picture of an accident in the village, and under that the words MEANS DANGER!

The leaflet says "1964 is General Election Year. For the electorate's benefit this leaflet details each party's official proposals for Bridge High Street road safety."

With the leaflets went reply postcards on which people could indicate whether they would help in the campaign to get a by-pass for Bridge.

QUESTION

People were asked on the cards if they would take an active role—walking in protest marches, etc.

Sir Leslie Thomas, the Conservative M.P. for Canterbury, said "The Ministry of Transport has plans for a limited by-pass running from the junction of the M2/A2 at Brenley Corner, cutting through South Canterbury and by-passing Bridge on the northern side of the village.

"The Minister is at present trying to reach a decision with the French Government on a Channel Tunnel. Once that question is resolved he can decide the future road priorities.

"We believe that whatever that decision may be it will still be necessary to extend M2 to Dover, and shall continue to press for this to be done as quickly as possible."

IN FAVOUR

Mr. J. H. Stewart, chairman, Canterbury Liberal Association, said "No one in his senses could deny that a tiny village sitting astride the main artery to the Continent is a 19th Century anachronism . . . We are strongly in favour of extending the M2 south of Bridge as soon as possible."

Problem Of The A2 Improvements Urged

It is "completely stupid" to go on waiting for a national agreement on the Channel Tunnel before agreeing to start improvements to the A2 between Faversham and Canterbury. Cllr. D. A. Lewis, local member of Bridge-Blean Rural District Council on Wednesday.

He urged the Council to press for a starting date for these improvements which, he said, ought to include a by-pass for Bridge.

"It is utterly stupid to end the M2 at Faversham and leave the other roads leading through to the ports of Kent," he said. "It is completely stupid to go on waiting for a national agreement of the Channel Tunnel—we shall never get road safety at Bridge."

"There is talk of Westenhanger being chosen as the site for the Channel Tunnel entrance—and that would not affect such villages as Boughton, Bridge and Lydden at all."

Traffic Increasing

"And it must be remembered that the traffic passing through Dover is increasing all the time. It is the busiest passenger port in the country."

"This Council should urge for action more than they are doing at the moment."

In full agreement was Cllr. J. H. Reid of Sturry, who said that the A2 from the end of the M2 down to Dover was "terrible and accident-prone."

He said, "We should press as hard as we can for a starting date for this work."

Cllr. B. G. Chittenden, the Divisional Highways Surveyor, also agreed, saying that the increased heavy traffic was destroying the surface of the A2 in places.

"I only hope the Minister of Transport will soon decide which route will be taken, so that the work can be proceeded with," he said.

KENTISH GAZETTE 31.1.64



All was peaceful and quiet in Bridge when this picture was taken. But behind every door there is the fear of the Easter traffic rush.

Teenagers Of Bridge Plan Big Protest March

MORE than fifty young residents of Bridge are planning an Easter protest march. They are calling on the Ministry of Transport to provide a by-pass round Bridge which, they claim, is one of the blackest danger-spots in Kent.

"The actual plans for the march are a closely guarded secret at the moment... but we are adopting shock tactics," says 20-year-old Mr. Brian Lewis, one of the leaders of the action group.

"The main road is 18ft. wide in places and, three years ago was coping with 6,700 vehicles a day during the peak period.

"Since the new motorway has been opened more and more drivers are choosing this route to the coast and, this summer, Bridge will be a veritable death-trap."

Mr. Lewis, a former Dover College boy, says he expects most of the villagers to turn out to swell the protest march.

"Residents of an Old People's Home in the village centre take their lives in their hands every time they venture out."

"And parents are scared stiff to let their children go out to play — or even to go to school because, for most of them, it means crossing

The main road is 18 ft. wide in places and three years ago was coping with 6,700 vehicles a day...

LIVE IN BRIDGE

"WITH vehicular traffic in either direction accelerating through its narrow street in order to gain momentum to climb the hill on the opposite side, it is obvious that the by-pass is not so much a question of 'if' as 'when'" — J. H. Stewart, Chairman, Canterbury Liberal Association.

"The problem of the density of traffic using Bridge High Street is not a small local issue" — Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P. for Canterbury.

"The situation is bound to become more dangerous because of the completion of parts of the M.2" — G. S. Cobbett, Prospective Labour Candidate for Canterbury.

Bulletin No. 1.

1st March, 1964.

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN.

Organiser: John Purchase, "Rosebank", High Street, Bridge. (Bridge 485).

Campaign Sec: Brian A. Lewis, 1 Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge (Bridge 254).

Dear Supporter,

Thank you for your interest in the campaign to improve the safety of Bridge High Street. At the time of writing this first bulletin, ~~over~~ nearly 100 people have shown interest and support for the movement.

The Government has approved a Channel Tunnel in principle, but this will not solve the traffic problem at Bridge at all. In fact it means that there will be an enormous increase in Continental traffic during the next few years until the Tunnel opens. The Government says that the construction of the Tunnel will take at least seven years from the start of the plan being put into operation. In the meantime what happens to Bridge?

The A20, with a feeder Motorway from the M2 will certainly absorb a great deal of heavy traffic from London and the North, but the Port Authorities in Dover will naturally compete for trade, and an increasing movement of traffic will be felt on the Dover road, especially up to the time of the opening of the Channel Tunnel.

It is clear from letters received from the Ministry since the Channel Tunnel decision that the Ministry is now sitting back blithely and intending to ignore Bridge. However, an immediate start should be made to improve the road conditions, and this the Ministry must learn.

A great many of you have offered to take part in demonstrations and we have planned one for Easter Sunday, 29th March, 1964 at 3.0 p.m. It will take approximately one hour to complete. So that the campaign receives the maximum publicity we intend to include in the procession a smashed motor-car on a trailer and other items to suggest the dangers of the road. Now, these additions and all such 'gimmicks' are unfortunately necessary if the press and television are to notice and report such demonstrations. Nobody demonstrates just for the fun of it. In this case, it is the safety of our children and elderly folk that is at stake.

Full details of the demonstration will be posted to you in due course. Please try to keep that afternoon free. It has been chosen carefully to have the maximum impact on holiday traffic, and at a time when you may well be free during the weekend.

Unfortunately, no campaign can run for long without some degree of financial support to cover the inevitable cost. We would like to thank most sincerely all those who have contributed recently.

Yours faithfully,

Brian A. Lewis, John Purchase.

* STOP PRESS! There was another traffic incident yesterday in Bridge involving an elderly person.

A2 PROTEST MARCH

The 'Death-Trap' Village Says: We Want By-Pass

BRIDGE, an ancient village straddling the A2 between Dover and Canterbury, is planning a protest march on Easter Sunday.

Nearly 100 villagers have volunteered to take part in the march up and down this section of the busy trunk road, which carries hundreds of cars to the cross-Channel ferries at Dover.

The reason for their protest? They want the village by-passed. In recent years, there have been numerous road accidents and five people have been killed.

The man behind the big march is 20-year-old Mr. Brian Lewis.

He said: "The main road is 18ft. wide in places and three years ago was coping with 6,700 vehicles a day. This part of the A2 was only built to cope with horse traffic."

CHILDREN

Play Peril

"But now that the motorway between Strood and Bremley Corner has opened more and more drivers are choosing this route to the cross-Channel ferries at Dover. Bridge is becoming a death trap."

"Residents of an old folk's home in the village take their lives in their hands every time they venture out. Villagers are afraid to let their children out to play," said Mr. Lewis.

In addition to banners, the organisers plan to use horses and vehicles, each bearing a special protest message for the Transport Minister.

SECRET SHOCK PLANS FOR ROAD SAFETY

IT is a closely guarded secret what form a demonstration will be taking to draw attention to the traffic hazards of Bridge High Street, on the Dover-Canterbury road (the Roman Watling Street).

Mr. John Purchase, who started a campaign for a by-pass two years ago, after the experience of seeing an accident outside his High Street house which ended fatally, told a KENT MESSENGER reporter:

"We are going to lay on a surprise, and we have 200 backers in the village. We have the approval of the clergy for what we intend to do."

In October, 1963, the youth of Bridge staged a protest march which bottled up traffic for a good half-hour.

The forthcoming demonstration—on Easter Sunday, March 29th—follows further abortive attempts to get the Minister of Transport to move in the matter, said Mr. Purchase.

An official quote from the Ministry itself gives an average of one person killed each year in a period of five years, 1958-63, nearly two seriously injured, and nearly four cases of slight injury.

Kent County Council census figures show that in 1961 over 6,300 vehicles passed through Bridge in a day—at peak times this rose to 6,700. Since then, with the opening of the M2, the situation is said to have worsened.

Meanwhile, the local road safety officer states that Bridge has been promised a by-pass for years.

But, despite correspondence with the Ministry, together with Mr. Purchase's warning that, in the event of another fatality, he will place his dossier at the coroner's disposal, little more has been done than to put down a dotted white line and splash kerbs with white paint!

Mr. Purchase, who among other things issues pamphlets, leaflets, and cards, as well as a periodic campaign bulletin, says the three political parties have been approached in view of a General Election.

It remains to be seen what he has thought up for March 29th!

BRIDGE PLANS PROTEST MARCH

The battle for a by-pass at Bridge takes another step forward on Easter Sunday. About 60 villagers—many of them young people—are to stage a protest march through the village where the A2 narrows to 18 feet.

Behind the march is 20-year-old Brian Lewis, who organised a similar protest last year.

"This year we propose to use shock tactics," he said. "Vehicles as well as pedestrians will take part in the march and these will highlight to the dangers with which villagers find themselves faced."

"The situation has really worsened in the village," Mr. Lewis said. "More and more traffic is using the A2 to get to Dover since the motorway opened."

"There have been five fatal accidents in the village in recent years and we feel we are justified in demanding action."

KENT HERALD 4.3.1964

EVENING NEWS 4.3.64

4.3.1964

Mr. AGENT & Secretary,

The Secretary,

The Ministry of Transport,

St. Christopher House,

Southwark Street, London, S.E.1

I tried to contact you at Kent House last Saturday but failed to do so. I understand that you have been unwell—I trust that you are better.

My reason for writing is to say that a meeting is arranged for Saturday April 4th, 1964 at

Dear Sir,

A public meeting is being held on Saturday April 4th., 1964, at 2.30p.m. in the Village Hall, Bridge, organised by the Bridge By-Pass Campaign. In the chair will be the Road Safety Officer of the district. Invited to speak at the meeting will be the Candidates for the 1964 Parliamentary Election from the Conservative, Liberal and Labour Associations for the Canterbury Division.

It is sincerely hoped that the Ministry will be able to arrange for one of the officers who knows something of the road conditions through the village, and the proposed plans to deal with the conditions, to be present at this meeting. It gives the Ministry an ideal opportunity to put its case, and since the Press has taken a lively interest in this proposed meeting it could ensure the widest possible reporting of the position as the Ministry sees it. There is exactly a month before the meeting, so I sincerely trust that the Ministry will find itself in a position to accept the invitation to speak. The Agenda is:-

1. Welcome to the supporters of the Campaign and public.
2. Brief statement by the Campaign organisers.
3. Brief statements by the three political representatives.
4. Statement by the representative of the Ministry.
5. Questions from the floggan arrange transport from London and

lunch for your representative.

Yours faithfully,

Purchase

The Bridge By-pass

Question For

Canterbury Division Conservative and Unionist Association

Parliamentary Representative: SIR LESLIE THOMAS, M.B.E., T.D., M.P.

President Alderman Mrs. G. R. Hews, C.B.E.
Chairman L. E. Hart, Esq., J.P.
Hon. Treasurers U. H. B. Alexander, Esq.
E. Parker, Esq., C.B.E., F.C.A.
Asst. Hon. Treasurer P. T. C. Wright, Esq.

Agent and Secretary E. C. F. Brown
9, Hawks Lane,
Canterbury.

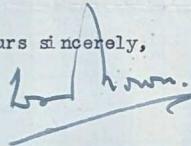
Telephone: Canterbury 4187

6th March, 1964.

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Your letter regarding your meeting on the 4th April has been forwarded to Sir Leslie Thomas to see if he is able to attend it. I would point out that in addition to Bridge there are 24 other villages in the constituency as well as 3 towns and it is quite impossible for him to accept all the engagements he is offered, particularly when he is not previously consulted as to the date.

Yours sincerely,



AGENT & SECRETARY.

be an hour class on Saturday mornings.

J. Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank,"
High Street,
BRIDGE,
Nr. Canterbury.

Canterbury Division Conservative and Unionist Association

Parliamentary Representative: SIR LESLIE THOMAS, M.B.E., T.D., M.P.

President Alderman Mrs. G. R. Hews, C.B.E.
Chairman L. E. Hart, Esq., J.P.
Hon. Treasurers U. H. B. Alexander, Esq.
E. Parker, Esq., C.B.E., F.C.A.
Asst. Hon. Treasurer P. T. C. Wright, Esq.

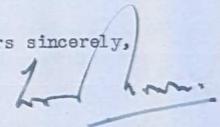
Agent and Secretary E. C. F. Brown
9, Hawks Lane,
Canterbury.
Telephone: Canterbury 64187

13th March, 1964.

Dear Mr. Purchese,

You will have heard from Sir Leslie Thomas that he is not coming to your meeting on the 4th April. I have arranged for Mr. A.J. Ross, the County Councillor in the Bridge Blean area, to be present. He will be prepared to deal with the subject on a factual basis. I would have thought it better to keep politics out of this subject; it is purely administration.

Yours sincerely,



AGENT & SECRETARY.

J. Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank,"
High Street,
BRIDGE,
Nr. Canterbury.

From: Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

9th March 1964

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter of 4th March which my Agent has forwarded to me.

I am sorry to say it will not be possible for me to attend the meeting you have arranged on Saturday 4th April as I am already committed on that day.

Yours sincerely

Leslie Thomas

J. Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury.

Langham park Farm,
Bisham Bourne,
Canterbury.
7.7.64.

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Thank you for your letter and for the invitation to come to the meeting you are holding at Bridge Village Hall on 4th April. I should certainly like to come to this.

I thought your pamphlets were very good indeed. Please excuse me for not thanking for them at the time, but as we had already discussed it so much, I knew you would understand.

Our next Read Safety meeting is on Thursday 2nd April. I hope to hear what Mr. Chittenden's plans are for the Pavement between Cartref and Bourne Park turning. I will probably also ask what progress is being made to improve the exit onto A2 from Union Lane, which is generally admitted to be unsatisfactory.

I would be glad if you could brief me about recent developments and also on any matters which we might usefully press at this juncture. You may of course prefer to get in touch with your own parish representative, Mr. Price, who is I believe also a member of the Read Safety Committee.

Yours sincerely,
George Gabbett
(George Gabbett)

16.3.1964

The Agent & Secretary,
The Conservative Association,
9, Hawk Lane,
Canterbury.

Dear Mr. Brown,

Thank you for your letters dated March 6th. and 13th., 1964.

Although naturally disappointed that Sir Leslie Thomas would be unable to be present at the meeting on April 4th., I was very pleased to hear that Mr. A.J. Ross had kindly consented to be present.

I noted both your comments as to the size of Sir Leslie's constituency and the thought that you felt that road safety at Bridge was not a political subject.

Administration, I understood, is the responsibility of Government - so, to invite the three men (one of whom will represent Bridge's interests in Parliament at the end of 1964) seemed to me to be eminently suitable. I am sorry you disagree. I note that you now shut on Saturdays.

Yours faithfully,

Purchese.
John Purchese.

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN Press Bulletin

Organiser: John Purchese, 'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge. Tel. Bridge 485.

Campaign Sec.: Brian A. Lewis, 1, Weston Villas, High St., Bridge. Tel. Bridge 254.

PRESS INFORMATION

Not for release until Sun. March 29th. at 3.0pm.

THE MIN. TWINS



'My dear Everend, an evening at Whist possibly — Bridge, never!'

*Untitled
Graffiti.*

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN Bulletin No. 2

Organiser: John Purchese, 'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge. Tel. Bridge 485.

Campaign Sec.: Brian A. Lewis, 1, Weston Villas, High St., Bridge. Tel. Bridge 254.

15th March, 1964.

Dear Supporter,

The Protest March against the traffic dangers in Bridge High Street will be on Easter Sunday, 29th March, 1964 as mentioned in our previous bulletin. The meeting place will be the lay-by a short distance up the hill towards Canterbury, at a quarter to three in the afternoon. The March starts at 3.0 p.m. prompt.

The Police say that they will attend with cars and Officers on foot to ensure safety for the marchers, so please do not hesitate on the grounds of safety to bring children if you wish - even in prams! The route for the march is down through the village to St. Peter's Church, turning off into the road to Bishopsbourne; reforming and returning up the other side of the High Street to the lay-by for dispersal. Eight people will be responsible for carrying banners and slogans, and six will distribute leaflets; but these duties will have been arranged in advance.

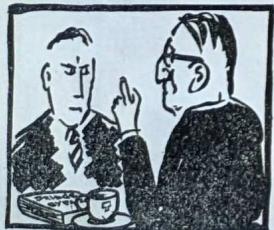
Please bring at least one friend with you for the walk, and encourage all you can to watch the march from the pavements. This is a serious demonstration, and the press are taking a lively interest in it, so please support it as far as you can.

A week after the march there will be a public meeting in the Village Hall, Bridge, on Saturday 4th April, 1964 at 2.30 p.m. Speakers invited include a Representative from the Ministry of Transport, and the three Candidates for the Canterbury Division in the General Election, Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., Mr. Ted Moss and Mr. George Cobbett. The Chair will be taken by the Road Safety Officer for Bridge, Mr. J. D. Smith and the agenda will include statements from the Campaign Organiser, the three Parliamentary Candidates and the Ministry Representative. Questions will be invited, so please come armed to the teeth with good questions!

This Bulletin sees the appearance of the Min. Twins, who will have a pertinent comment each time they appear.

Thank you for your support.

THE MIN. TWINS



'My dear Everpend, never admit that statistics prove anything but the need for delay!'

Yours faithfully,

Brian A. Lewis,

John Purchese.

St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, S.E.1.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
DIVISIONAL ROAD ENGINEER
METROPOLITAN DIVISION

GAYWOOD HOUSE, GREAT PETER STREET

LONDON S.W.1
TELEPHONE: ABBEY 2262 Waterloo 7999
Ext. 2342.

25th March, 1964.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 4th March inviting an officer of this Ministry to a meeting at Bridge.

For long established reasons which I am sure you will readily appreciate, it is not the practice for Ministry officials to attend the kind of public meeting you have in mind. I am afraid, therefore, that I must decline your kind invitation to attend or be represented on the 4th April. Meanwhile, I understand that the Minister is hoping shortly to write again to Sir Leslie Thomas.

Yours faithfully,

J. Q. S. Dakers
Divisional Road Engineer

J. Purchese, Esq.,
'Rosebank',
High Street,
BRIDGE,
Canterbury,
Kent.

Wednesday 25th March, 1964. I.T.V. Day By Day - Regional News.

Newscaster:-

The people who live in the village of Bridge, Nr. Canterbury, are staging a protest march on Sunday. They are protesting against the accident rate on the A.2. which runs through the village.

Ewen McNaughton reports:-

"Built for horses, this is the A.2.. Today, the road which runs to and from the continent. It is used by nearly 7,000 vehicles a day in summer rushing to the boats at Dover, and here at Bridge the A.2. becomes a death trap. Traffic races down one hill into the village, and rushes up another hill out of it. 8 people have died, and 47 have been injured in accidents here in the last 5 years. Something had to be done. Maybe the initiative of 10 year old Susan Scarisbrick is that something, for she wrote a letter to the Ministry of Transport. Susan, why did you write to the Ministry of Transport?" Well, I thought that because there had been so many accidents on the road, that if a child wrote up to the Ministry of Transport perhaps they would take more notice! "Did they reply to you?" 'Yes they did; they said that they might build a road round Bridge.'

"Another young villager who is trying to organise official action is 20 year old Brian Lewis. He has organised a protest march for Easter Sunday. Why did you organise this march?" 'Because I was nearly killed myself one day when I was getting into my car, and also I know of a girl who was killed down here.' "How many people are going to be on the march?" 'Between 100 and 150.' "Have you been fighting for some time for a new road?" 'Yes, for very nearly 3 years now I have been writing to the Ministry and of course to the local press.'

WHY DO WE MARCH?

8 DEAD IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS!

■ We believe BRIDGE HIGH ST.
is dangerous. It must be BY-
PASSED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

■ Meanwhile we urge the Min-
istry of Transport to slow down
the traffic!

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, ROSEBANK HIGH ST, BRIDGE

Villagers march in protest

About 150 villagers in Bridge, a village on the A2 between Canterbury and Dover, used coffins, horses and hearses during a march yesterday to delay traffic and draw attention to their demand for a by-pass round the village.

The villagers say that in the past five years eight people have been killed and 50 injured in accidents on the road through the village. An estimated 600 vehicles were said to be passing through the village hourly.

Mr Ted Moss, the prospective Liberal parliamentary candidate, for Canterbury, pushed his one-year-old baby in a pram. Mr George Cobbett, Labour's prospective candidate, also took part, but Sir Leslie Thomas, the Conservative MP for Canterbury, was not represented.

GUARDIAN 30.3.1964

PROTEST BY 'HEARSE'S'
With mock hearses and coffins, 150 villagers of Bridge, which straddles the A 2 between Canterbury and Dover, marched through the village yesterday to back their demand for a by-pass. In the past five years eight people have died and 50 have been injured on the main road.

DAILY TELEGRAPH 30.3.1964

Dead slow road

A procession of 100 teenagers escorting a lorry carrying a wrecked vehicle and a vintage car caused traffic jams yesterday on the London to Dover road at Bridge, near Canterbury. It was in protest against delay in building a by-pass.

DAILY EXPRESS 30.3.1964



Villagers at Bridge, on the A 2 between Dover and Canterbury, taking part in a protest march yesterday because they want the village by-passed. They claim that this section of the road was only built to cope with horse traffic and is now used by too many vehicles.

THE TIMES 30.3.1964

BE JUST AND FEAR NOT

EDITORIAL VIEW

Public Opinion Does Matter!

WHAT a pity it is that the Ministry of Transport has said "no" to an invitation to be represented at an all-village all-party road safety meeting to be held at Bridge tomorrow to further the claims for a by-passing of A.2 traffic.

For a long time, the campaigners have been trying to wrestle with the Ministry, but have not been able to come to grips. This failure is indicative of officialdom's shortsightedness in not heeding the cries of people who live on the spot, and who claim that the accident roll over five years should be sufficient evidence to produce effective action.

The determined villagers staged a macabre demonstration on Easter Sunday. Presumably the coffin was intended to be in keeping with the latest official road safety posters.

Nevertheless, accounts of the procession showed that there was traffic chaos. As the campaigners have other demonstrations in mind, we would urge them to be exceedingly careful not to endanger traffic. Their cause is good, but one mishap in a road demonstration could do the cause much harm.

On the other hand, it is a shocking business that such methods have to be used to bring home to those in authority the message of "Safety First." After all, it is the Ministry's own slogan!

KENTISH EXPRESS 4.4.64

BRIDGE TRAFFIC PROBLEM

To the Editor,—

May I add a postscript to the correspondence which you have been publishing recently regarding the Bridge traffic problem. Over a very long period of time I have been in touch with the authorities on the matter, and as I am sure every responsible resident of Bridge now understands, it is part of a very much bigger problem.

A number of planning and programming lessons arise from the need to bypass Bridge (and it is because of these the Ministry informs me their engineers are taking longer than usual), not the least of which is to ensure that as little as possible is taken of some of the best agricultural land in Kent.

As "Local Yodel" in his admirable letter so rightly pointed out, the problem must now be handed over to someone else—it must be solved.

Perhaps it would be as well if the problem of Bridge as a traffic accident spot were put in its right perspective.

I have in front of me the latest "Black Spot Record" for the county, indicating where the most serious and most accidents are occurring. It is in the form of a league table showing the 51 worst accident spots on Town and Class roads calculated on a rolling basis over a period of three years. Happily for all, Bridge is not included; if it were it would be at the bottom of the league with 23 points against the 136 points of the worst spot at the head of the league.

I believe a Ministerial decision will be given in the not too distant future. I shall continue to press.

LESLIE M. THOMAS.
House of Commons.

BRIDGE MARCH

To the Editor,

I see that Mr. George Cobbett, the Socialist candidate, and Mr. Ted Moss, the Liberal candidate, took part in the march through Bridge in support of a by-pass. Can it be that they did this because Aldermaston was cancelled this year?

J. SENIOR.
119 Whitstable Road,
Canterbury. 4.4.64
KENTISH GAZETTE

M2

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF: HGP-1440-060

DATE.

30.3.1964

Organiser: JOHN PURCHASE,
'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

Campaign Sec.: BRIAN A. LEWIS,
1, Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 254

V.A.S. Dakers, Esq.,
Divisional Road Engineer,
Metropolitan Division,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street, London, S.E.1

Dear Mr. Dakers,

Thank you for your letter dated March 25th., 1964, saying that your Department must decline the invitation to be represented at the meeting being held at Bridge on Saturday, April 4th..

We regret the decision not to attend. The phrase in your letter, "attend the kind of public meeting you have in mind" suggests that you feel it would be a meeting hostile to the Ministry. Not so; the chair is being taken by the Road Safety Officer and the discussion is intended to be a dispassionate appraisal of the situation.

It would be helpful to receive a brief statement from your Department in lieu of a representative. Although the intention of the Minister to write to Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., might weigh in this matter, we hope that the more immediate point is made — namely that the Ministry of Transport is at least contemplating action.

An empty chair at the meeting, and no statement to offer as a substitute, might suggest to the villagers of Bridge that the Ministry did not care in the matter, a suggestion we are sure you would hasten to deplore as far from correct.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese.
John Purchese.

Post scriptum. To facilitate matters, might we ask that this correspondence is shown to G. Davis, Esq., L. Durrant, Esq., F. Samuel, Esq., R. Pearson, Esq., and R.L. Pearce, Esq. who have had dealings in the matter. I believe your Mr. Hewett also has a knowledge of the situation.

St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, S.E.1.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
DIVISIONAL ROAD ENGINEER
METROPOLITAN DIVISION
GAYWOOD HOUSE, GREAT PETER STREET
LONDON S.W.1
TELEPHONE: ABBEY 2262 Waterloo 7999
Ext. 2342

2nd April, 1964.

Dear Mr. Purchese,

With reference to your letter dated 30th March, 1964 and your request for a brief statement from my Department instead of a representative at your meeting on Saturday, April 4th, I would refer you to Mr. R. L. Pearce's letter of 11th February, 1964.

I do not think that at the present moment I can add to what Mr. Pearce says in the second and third paragraphs of his letter.

Yours faithfully,

J.A.S. Dakers

Divisional Road Engineer

John Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank",
High Street,
Bridge,
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J.A.S. Dakers

Divisional Road Engineer

M.2 TAKES BRUNT

Comment from an A.A. spokesman at Maidstone on Tuesday: "There has never been an Easter like it before—and the weather could hardly have been worse."

"But at least we have some idea what to expect this year—more traffic than ever before. It is clear that the M.2 is going to take the brunt of the burden from now on."

Dover established new passenger records when more people and vehicles passed through the port than ever recorded during a similar holiday period.

British Railways noted a remarkable increase in the number of Continentals coming into Dover, especially those with vehicles.

More than 5,000 passengers passed through Manston Airport over the holiday on passenger services operated by Air Ferry to Le Touquet, Ostend and all parts of the Continent. There was a similar rush at Ferryfield Airport, Lydd.

Kent Messenger. 4.4.64

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1964

Kentish Observer.

150 Silent Protest Marchers Block

Easter Traffic

They Hope To Halt Road Deaths

A PROCESSION OF ABOUT 150 YOUNG PEOPLE WOUND ITS WAY SILENTLY THROUGH THE VILLAGE OF BRIDGE ON EASTER SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN SILENT PROTEST AT THE GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF ACTION IN PROVIDING A BY-PASS FOR THE BUSY A2—WHICH RUNS THROUGH THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE.

The villagers claim that the fast road causes too much traffic to go through the village too quickly, resulting in too many accidents.

Headed by a banner "Bridge By-Pass Campaign" and followed by another, preceding two horsemen, inscribed: "The road was built for this," the marchers came through the village towards Dover from a point half-way down one hill leading into the village and returned in the opposite direction.

At one time over 100 cars were held up by the marchers.

EIGHT DEATHS

Included in the procession were lorries bearing a wrecked car, its roof half torn off, and an 1893 Daimler car, symbolic of the vehicles for which the road was designed.

EVERY METHOD

At the end of the march, the organizers, Mr. John Purchese and Mr. Brian Lewis, told the "Kentish Observer" that they intended to use "every method" to bring home to the Ministry the state of affairs in Bridge.

A protest meeting is to be held on Saturday afternoon in the village hall. A Ministry of Transport representative had been invited, but the invitation was declined, said Mr. Purchese.

The prospective Liberal and Labour candidates would be there, however, he said.

County Councillor A. J. Ross is to represent the Conservative Party at the meeting.

The three parties' views of the situation are summarised in a small leaflet handed out by the protesters during the demonstration.

BY-PASS PLANS

In the leaflet Canterbury's M.P., Sir Leslie Thomas, is quoted as saying: "The Ministry of Transport has plans for a limited by-pass running from the junction of M2/A2 at Brenley Corner, cutting through South Canterbury and by-passing Bridge on the northern side of the village.

"This would alleviate the problem of traffic in the village High Street, but would seriously interfere with valuable agricultural and horticultural holdings.

"The Ministry are also considering a wider by-pass of Canterbury which would join with the A2 near Lydd. Both these schemes would help the local problem of Bridge."

Mr. J. H. Stewart, chairman of Canterbury Division Liberal Association, is quoted in the leaflet as saying:

"No one in his senses could deny that a tiny village sitting astride the main artery to the Continent is a nineteenth-century anachronism. Couple this with its geographical situation in the trough between two hills with vehicular traffic accelerating through its narrow street in order to gain momentum to climb the hill on the other side, and it is obvious that the by-pass is not much of a question of 'if' as 'when'."

Prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate Mr. George S. Cobbett is quoted as commenting: "The situation is bound to become more dangerous because of the completion of part of the M2 motorway from London."

SEVERAL YEARS

"This will certainly increase the traffic through Bridge, while the new housing development there means that more people, and particularly children, will be exposed to the danger."

"No doubt a by-pass round Bridge will be built eventually, but this may not be for several years."

"Until then, more must be done to reduce the speed and danger of traffic in the High Street. We know that the vigorous efforts of many residents have already achieved improvements. But more still needs to be done, and I wish them further success."

WHEN A VILLAGE MARCHES IN PROTEST

By Eddie Thomson

ABOUT 150 marchers set up a deliberate traffic jam on Easter Sunday... in their campaign for a by-pass round the danger-spot village of Bridge, near Canterbury.

The chaos amid the holiday rush was the latest effort by campaigners against local road safety hazards. And they succeeded in halting traffic for hundreds of yards in both directions—which was exactly what they intended to do.

Now they plan to embarrass the Ministry of Transport into doing something about the safety of the village.

Many activities have been arranged for the next few weeks.

"We will really shake the Ministry," said campaign organiser, Mr. John Purchese. "And afterwards they surely must do something about the danger here."

Dover-bound traffic descending the long hill into the village had to halt as the procession moved off from a lay-by half-way down the gradient.

Banners

There were several near crashes as the marchers headed with a banner reading "Bridge By-Pass Campaign," began to block half the road.

It consisted largely of young people, but several families were taking part and one man was being pushed in a wheel-chair.

Mr. George Cobbett, Canterbury's Labour Parliamentary candidate, and the Liberal candidate, Mr. Ted Moss, with his wife and young son, were present.

Then came another banner, "The Road Was Built For This," which was followed by two riders on horseback and a veteran car. The next banner read, "Not This!"

This was a huge coal lorry loaned for the occasion by a local contractor, followed by a wrecked estate car, borne on a low-load trailer.

Close behind this was a scarlet-draped coffin on a handcart accompanied by three bearers in black.

Police were keeping an eye on the procession and holding up all the vehicles in one direction to allow a steady one-way flow.

By-pass

But many travellers had to wait before they could drive through the village.

After the marchers had moved slowly through Bridge in one direction, they turned and made an even slower trip back to the lay-by.

The campaigners have been pressing for a by-pass round the village—which straddles the main



Banners halt cars



KENTISH EXPRESS

Marchers jam

Easter traffic

Two die on Kent roads

MOTORISTS on Kent's roads during the Easter week-end holiday responded to the Minister of Transport's plea for courtesy.

And in spite of traffic reaching an all-time record on some main roads, only two people were killed—the same number who died during Easter, 1963.

One death was at Bekesbourne, where auto-cyclist Mr. Albert Edward Kennett, 65, of Distant View, Bekesbourne, died after a collision with a car at the junction of Adisham-rd., Bekesbourne.

The other death was a 19-year-old motor-cyclist, Mr. Peter Warner, of Ninefield-rd., Bexhill, killed on the A21 Hastings to London road at Lamberhurst on Friday in a head-on collision with a car.

BUSIEST

An Automobile Association spokesman said that the A2 London to Dover road via Canterbury was the busiest in the county.

And the M2 motorway carried its biggest traffic quota so far.

The holiday began quietly, and some roads were almost deserted on Friday. The coldest Easter for 80 years kept many motorists at home.

It was Easter Monday that brought out the traffic. Late in the evening 3,500 vehicles an hour were streaming home along the A2.

KENTISH EXPRESS 4.4.64



Over 100 people joined the protest march at Bridge on Sunday, where the villagers are demanding a by-pass. This is one way they hope to attract the attention of the Minister of Transport. *KENTISH EXPRESS*

A PURPLE-COVERED coffin trundled slowly through the main street of Bridge on Easter Sunday afternoon. It was a grim and grisly reminder from the villagers—without much love—to the Minister of Transport.

It was a reminder that eight people have died and another 50 have been injured in road accidents at Bridge over the last five years.

The coffin, with a wrecked car, heavy lorries, horses and a veteran car—and accompanied by about 150 villagers—hammered home the demands that Bridge is making for a by-pass.

The procession held up holiday motorists. At one time about 100 cars were queuing to pass through the village.

Meanwhile, organisers Mr. John Purchese, a film industry cameraman, and 20-year-old Brian Lewis, son of a local councillor, rubbed their hands.

"This is just what we hoped for," they confessed. "This demonstration of villagers shows that Bridge is sincere in their demands for a by-pass."

"And this sort of thing is going on until the Minister of Transport gives in. We shall pester him until we get our by-pass."

Both warned that the cars began to pile up and the cortège made its way slowly towards the bottleneck village centre. And pile up was almost the right word. Several cars speeding down towards Bridge had to brake violently to pull up before crashing into the rear of the queue.

"See," said one villager. "That's the sort of thing that we are trying to avoid here. Motorists don't seem to be aware of the dangers of going too fast through Bridge."

Young and Old

In Sunday's procession were the ordinary folk of Bridge who have no axe to grind—other than their desire for safer roads. They were both young and old, parents with their children and members of the local youth club.

Also in the procession was Mr. Ted Moss, the Canterbury prospective Liberal Parliamentary candidate. Mr. Moss, accompanied by his wife, pushed his year-old child in a pram. Cllr. George Cobbett, the Labour Party's General Election candidate, also took part. But there was no representative of Sir Leslie Thomas, the Conservative M.P.

The next step in Bridge's fight for a by-pass is Saturday's protest meeting in the Village Hall. The chairman will be the local road safety officer (Mr. J. D. Smith). On the platform will be Mr. Moss, Mr. Cobbett and Cllr.

A. J. Ross will represent Sir Leslie Thomas.

"The Minister of Transport was invited to send a representative but has declined," said Mr. Purchese. "So there will be an empty chair on the platform labelled 'The Ministry of Transport'."

Mr. Purchese and Mr. Lewis have further stunts up their sleeves for keeping Bridge before the Minister's eyes.

Said Mr. Purchese: "We shall be doing something else in a fortnight's time. It's a good one but I cannot reveal what it is just yet."

M.M.



A wrecked car was used by Bridge villagers in their protest march on Sunday to draw attention to the need for a by-pass. [More pictures on page 15.]

YOUNG AND OLD DEMAND BY-PASS

Bridge On The March

PROTEST WITH A COFFIN



PEOPLE OF BRIDGE escort a coffin through the village in silent protest against delays in building a by-pass.

Village angry at by-pass delay

TEENAGERS and their parents caused a traffic pile-up on the London-Dover A2 road near Canterbury on Sunday afternoon when they escorted a purple-covered coffin through a village.

Other youngsters handed out leaflets which declared that eight people had died in local road crashes in the past five years.

Also in the procession were two men on horseback and a veteran car (tied on a lorry) — to stress what the road was originally built for — and a wrecked car on a lorry behind the coffin and bare-headed mourners.



THE HEAD of the "funeral procession"

It happened at Bridge. Jams formed at both ends of the High Street, as they marched up and down for an hour in protest against delay in building a by-pass around the village.

Mr. John Purchese, the campaign organiser, and Mr. Brian Lewis, secretary, told a KENT MESSENGER reporter at Bridge: "The time of the exercise has been chosen to cause the maximum traffic dislocation.

"To follow-up the march there will be a public meeting at Bridge on Saturday to which a spokesman from the Ministry of Transport has been invited.

"Also present will be representatives of the Conservative, Liberal and Labour committees, Canterbury Division.

"These activities have been provoked by the apparent indifference of the Ministry of

KENT MESSENGER 4.4.62

Transport to the rapidly developing dangers in the High Street, caused by too many cars and lorries trying to speed through to attack the hills which lead away from the High Street at both ends."

Bridge, where between 6,300-6,700 vehicles pass along the High Street EVERY DAY, has no Belisha or Panda crossings and no traffic lights.

FLASHBACK TO 1963—An official of the county council told a public inquiry in October (into a filling-station application) that the amount of traffic at Bridge justified a three-lane carriageway, whereas the High Street is 18 FEET wide and grossly over-loaded.

'WHY I JOINED THE BRIDGE BY-PASS APPEAL MARCH'

Lib. candidate

MR. Ted Moss, prospective Liberal candidate for the Canterbury Division, made a statement to the Canterbury Liberals' Divisional Executive Committee on Sunday just after taking part in the by-pass appeal march through Bridge village.

Mr. Moss said: "I have been asked why my family and I joined the protest march in Bridge. We, as a family, took part because we believe that not only here in Bridge, but all over the country, our roads are both completely inadequate for the motor traffic that they must bear, and also deadly dangerous to both pedestrians and motorists alike.

"What conditions will be like in 1974 I shudder to think. We are shirking our duty to the future generation by failing to implement immediately proposals made in the Buchanan Report and by the Crowther Steering Committee.

"As far back as 1952 we Liberals made proposals similar to those recently propounded by Buchanan; proposals for the segregation of vehicles and pedestrians."

OVERCROWDED

Mr. Moss went on:

"As the number of vehicles on our already overcrowded roads increases — an estimated doubling in the next ten years — so the number of people killed and maimed on our roads will increase.

"Minor battles of the Somme will be seen on our roads all over the country unless we determine to plan otherwise now.

"We Liberals offer the nation plan to help reduce the appalling carnage on our roads, and to give Britain a proper modern transport system.

"Briefly, we say commence implementing Crowther and Buchanan now. Immediately set up Regional Authorities throughout the country to plan the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles now. Re-plan our city traffic to remove all through traffic from the streets and create precinct shopping centres.

"Implement a dynamic roads programme now. The current development of roads, particularly motorways, is staggering in its inefficiency and inadequacy — we have built only 59 miles of motorway a year since 1958. Liberal Policy states that we must spend £200,000,000 a year on our roads over the next 20 years.

"This sum will provide us with a comprehensive network of motorways, wider trunk roads,

ways, new ring roads, flyovers and bridges.

"Traffic delays in 1961 have been estimated to have cost the nation £500,000,000. It is not a question of us being unable to afford new roads, but a question of us being unable not to afford them.

POLICY

"Road policy of course must also be considered in conjunction with other forms of transport. The railway, canal, sea, air and hovercraft, forms of travel must all be co-ordinated to take account of community benefits", he declared.

"Liberals nonetheless believe in incentive and true competition. We do not subscribe to nationalism of road haulage nor its extension to other forms of transport. Rather do we believe that effective co-ordination of transport can only be achieved by the free choice of the consumer between services based on something like true economic cost.

"On the own admission of the Ministry of Transport, there are dozens of places in a much worse plight than Bridge. It is our duty as citizens to ensure that these traffic problems are dealt with as a matter of national emergency. I have already made my position about conditions in Bridge quite plain.

KENT MESSENGER 4.4.62

A COFFIN IN THE MAIN STREET

BY MALCOLM MITCHELL

A purple-covered coffin handled slowly through the main street of Bridge on Easter Sunday afternoon. It was a grim and grisly reminder from the villagers—without much love—to the Minister of Transport.

It was a reminder that eight people have died and another 50 have been injured in road accidents at Bridge over the last five years. The coffin, with a wrecked car, heavy lorries, horses and a veteran car—and accompanied by about 150 villagers—paraded home the demands that Bridge is making for a by-pass.

The procession held up holiday motorists. At one time about 100 cars were queuing to pass through the village. Meanwhile, organisers Mr. John Purchese, a film industry cameraman, and 20-year-old Brian Lewis, son of a local councillor, rubbed their hands. "This is just what we hoped for," they confessed. "This demonstration of villagers shows that the people of Bridge are sincere in their demand for a by-pass."

And this sort of thing is going on until the Minister of Transport gives in. "We shall pester him until we get on bypasses."

Both watched as the cars began to pile up and the cortège moved its way slowly towards the bottleneck village centre. And pile up was almost the right word.

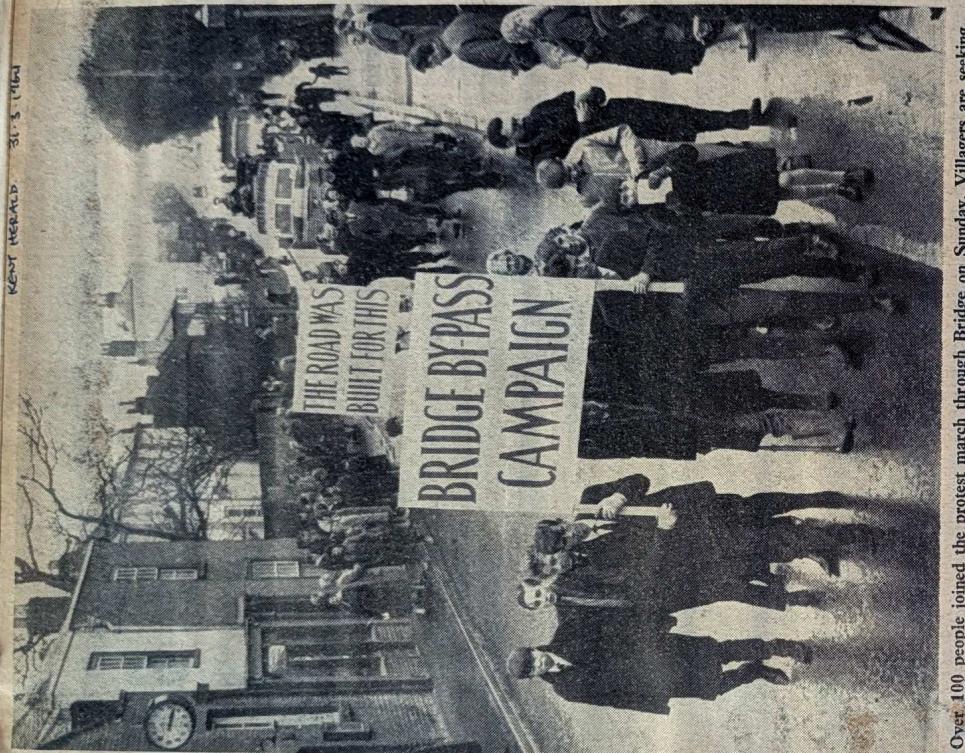
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Also in the procession was Mr. Ted Moss, the Liberal Parliamentary candidate, Mr. Moss accompanied by his wife, pasted his youngest child in a pram. Cllr. George Cobbe, the Labour Party's General Election candidate, also took part.

Over 100 people joined the protest march through Bridge on Sunday. Villagers are seeking a by-pass and this is one way they hope to claim the Minister of Transport's attention.



LIBERALS' TRANSPORT POLICIES

Among those taking part in the Bridge by-pass demand march on Sunday was Mr. Ted Moss, the Liberal Parliamentary candidate. The same day he made a speech to the Divisional Executive Committee on why he and his family had joined the march. "We as a family took part because we believe that not only in Bridge, but all over the country, our roads are both completely inadequate for the motor traffic that they must bear, and also deadly dangerous to both pedestrians and motorists alike," he said. "If I am returned to Parliament for this constituency, I shall consider it one of my first duties to exert all the pressure that is possible upon the Minister of Transport until Bridge has by-passed."



Over 100 people joined the protest march through Bridge on Sunday. Villagers are seeking a by-pass and this is one way they hope to claim the Minister of Transport's attention. 50 injured in five years.

How Liberals Would Tackle Roads Problem

By Canterbury's Candidate

Among those taking part in the Bridge by-pass demand march on Sunday was Mr. Ted Moss, the Liberal Parliamentary candidate. The same day he made a report to the Divisional Executive Committee on why he and his family had joined the march.

"Briefly, we say commence planning Canterbury and Buchanan now. Immediately set out regional authorities throughout the country to plan the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles now. Replan our city traffic to remove all through traffic from the streets and shopping centres."

"Implement a dynamic roads programme now. The current development of roads, particularly motorways, is staggering in its inefficiency and inadequacy. We have built only 59 miles of motorway a year since 1958."

"Liberal policy states that we must spend £200,000 a year on our roads over the next 20 years. This sum will provide us with a comprehensive network of motorways, wider trunk roads, dual carriageways, new ring roads, flyovers and bridges."

"Traffic delays in 1961 have been estimated to have cost the nation £600,000,000. It is not a question of us being unable to afford new roads, but a question of us being unable *not* to afford them."

"Road policy of course must also be considered in conjunction with other forms of transport. The railway, canal, sea, air and hovercraft forms of travel must all be co-ordinated to take account of community benefits."

"Liberals, nonetheless, believe in incentive and true competition. We do not subscribe to nationalisation of road haulage, nor its extension to other forms of transport. Rather do we believe that effective co-ordination of transport can only be achieved by the free choice of the consumer between services based on something like true economic cost."

"On the own admission of the Ministry of Transport, there are dozens of places in a much worse plight than Bridge."

"It is our duty as citizens to ensure that these traffic problems are dealt with as a matter of national emergency. I have already made my position about conditions in Bridge quite plain."

"If I am returned to Parliament for this constituency I shall consider it one of my first duties to exert all the pressure that I possibly can upon the Minister of Transport until Bridge is by-passed."

KENTISH GAZETTE 446

5.4.1964

A. Wedgwood-Benn, Esq.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

Dear Mr. Wedgwood-Benn,

It was suggested that I should contact you over the traffic problem at Bridge since you have been Labour spokesman on Transport at various times. At all events, you would know to whom this letter should be addressed - and possibly you would pass it on.

We have a curious situation in this village brought about by monumental inactivity on the part of the Ministry of Transport. Bridge lies on A2, some three miles from Canterbury on the Dover Road. A quick glance at the map will show you that A2 is in almost a straight line between London and Dover, with the Dartford Tunnel loop connecting northbound traffic to the road, and with 25 miles of M2 motorway included from Rochester to Brenley Corner near Faversham. The making of M2 has attracted a considerable amount of the old A20 traffic, and commercial fleets are switching to the A2 route to the Continent through Dover.

The village itself is in a valley, so that all drivers instinctively speed up through the village High Street in order to attack the opposite hill. There are in the High Street no traffic lights, no pedestrian crossings and poor gas-lighting at night. The carriageway is only 18' wide at points with pavements under 3' wide. Traffic is 'restricted' to 30m.p.h. There have been 8 deaths in the last 5 years in this street, 22 cases of serious injury and 27 cases of slight injury. We have had promises of a by-pass on and off over the past 15 years, but nothing happens.

This Campaign staged a protest march on Easter Sunday attended by 150 of the village's 900 population, and a meeting was held in the village hall yesterday where the Labour and Liberal Parliamentary Candidates spoke. The M.P., Sir Leslie Thomas, was represented by a Conservative County Councillor. Sir Leslie, in a letter to the local press the day before said "I have in front of me the latest 'Black Spot Record' for the county...It is in the form of a league table showing the 51 worst accident spots on Trunk and Class 1 roads...Happily for all, Bridge is not included." Bridge is 53rd. in the League, but when you note that 1st. had 2 fatalities, 14 serious accidents and 43 slight accidents over a 3 year period it is not difficult to see Bridge very nearly rivals these figures.

-2-

The Ministry of Transport knows our feelings about the road conditions, but does nothing at all. There are five other villages along A2 between Brenley Corner and Dover who have the same problem; Boughton, Harbledown, Kearsney, Lydden and Temple Ewell. We are thinking of contacting these villages to make a combined protest to the Ministry, but at the same time we feel Bridge has a particular claim of urgency, being 53rd. in County League table or no.

Could we ask you to examine this matter? The Labour prospective Parliamentary candidate (who sits on the Bridge-Blean R.D.C. Road Safety Committee) is Mr. George Cobbett, who lives at Langham Park Farm, Bishopsbourne, Canterbury, Kent. He can confirm the situation.

I apologise for adding to your work, but having met you - as the sound recordist in the A-R.T.V. team who covered your re-election at Bristol - I know from what you said at the time that you consider human problems of this kind in a serious manner.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese
John Purchese.

5.4.1964

The Director,
The Road Research Laboratories,
D.S.I.R., Harmondsworth,
Middlesex.

Dear Sir,

The Bridge By-Pass Campaign is primarily a road safety campaign, since in this village High Street on A2 between Dover and Canterbury, there have been 8 deaths during the past 5 years, 22 cases of serious injury and 27 cases of slight injury. (Figures that are 15 times the National average when rated against population).

Because of an interesting psychological point about driving through the village, there being a hill on each side, we suffer a great deal from speeding vehicles and there have been cases of lorries whose brakes have failed in a spectacular fashion during the past years.

It is because of these conditions - the 18' wide carriageway - the 7,000 plus vehicles per day - the bends in the road - the lack of crossings and traffic lights - that I felt it worth while drawing your attention to these conditions. There are worse places, no doubt, but the drivers seem lulled into false security, and this aspect would appear to be of interest.

There is talk of an eventual by-pass, but since ^{this} will happen in the distant future, we are having to think in terms of improvement on the present road to combat the rapidly increasing traffic through to Dover on this popular road. It is popular because of the construction of M2, 25 miles of motorway. Traffic census figures show an increase of 47% since the opening of M2, between Brenley Corner and Canterbury. The bulk of this traffic we feel continues to Dover through Bridge.

If you would like to go any further with this matter, I know you will contact the Ministry of Transport. Their ref. number is at the head of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

Burline
John Purchese.

5.4.1964

The Secretary,
The Ministry of Transport,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

- for the attention of the Minister.

Dear Mr. Marples,

At a Public Meeting held in the Village Hall, Bridge, on Saturday April 4th., attended by speakers from the three political parties, and chaired by the Road Safety Officer for the district, the following Resolution was proposed, seconded and carried nemine contradicente:-

"That this Meeting urges the Minister of Transport, as an interim road safety measure, to provide traffic lights at the junction of Patrizebourne Road and High Street, Bridge, and to reinstate the pedestrian crossing across the High Street at this point - these being the minimum measures to combat the heavy and increasing traffic through the village."

This Resolution was proposed by ^{Carville} Mr. H.T. Price and seconded by Mr. J.J. Williamson. All speakers at the Meeting condemned your inaction over the matter of road safety in Bridge, and the fact that your Ministry failed to send a Representative to the Meeting was underlined by the fact that we had a vacant chair at the table with the legend "Ministry of Transport Representative" printed in front of it.

Yours faithfully,

J.D. Smith
J.D. Smith.
Road Safety Officer, Bridge.

Burline
J. Purchese.
Campaign Organiser.

5.4.1964

The Clerk of the Council,
Dover Rural District Council,
Temple Ewell, Kent.

Dear Sir,

~~Dear Mr. Boileau~~
The Bridge By-Pass Campaign is probably known to your Council as a group of villagers at Bridge attempting to penetrate the monumental sloth of the Ministry of Transport and achieve safer road conditions for motorists and pedestrians alike in Bridge.

A public meeting was held yesterday in the Village Hall at Bridge. The Ministry had been asked to send a representative, and so had the three political parties who are entering candidates in the forthcoming General Election. The politicians came, but the Ministry sent a letter.

~~the three political parties who are entering~~
Out of the discussion, chaired by Mr. J. D. Smith, Road Safety Officer, came the suggestion that the six villages (or districts) affected by the increase in A2 traffic - Boughton, Harbledown, Bridge, Lydden, Kearsney and Temple Ewell - should combine in representations to the Ministry. Mr. A. J. Ross said that unified strength of that kind might well achieve more than the individual efforts of various local groups.

I would like to approach your Council with regard particularly to Lydden, Kearsney and Temple Ewell to see if such a suggestion meets with approval in broad outline. I am well aware that you might feel that an official body such as your Council cannot possibly align itself with a highly unofficial body such as the Bridge By-Pass Campaign. However, if your Council knew of one unofficial person in much the same position as myself who might be interested, forces might be joined satisfactorily.

Letters are being written to the other authorities on the same lines as this; we should be very glad to hear your comments.

Yours faithfully,

Purchese
John Purchese.

Bulletin No. 3.

9th April, 1964.

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN.

Organiser: John Purchese, "Rosebank", High Street, Bridge. (Bridge 485).

Campaign Sec: Brian A. Lewis, 1 Weston Villas, High St., Bridge. (Bridge 254).

Dear Supporter,

The March was excellent from the publicity viewpoint, resulting in photographs and reports in "The Times", "The Guardian", "The Daily Telegraph", "The Daily Express", "The Daily Herald" - and fully reported in "The Kentish Gazette", "The Kent Herald", "The Kentish Express", "The Kentish Observer" and "The Kent Messenger".

We want to thank everyone who turned out for this demonstration, and those who kindly gave great assistance in the provision of vehicles and exhibits. Thank you all very much. By the way; did you see the coverage on ITN News later the same evening?

The Meeting on 4th April proved that there is much genuine concern in the village about the road safety conditions. Mr. A. J. Ross, representing Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., promised all support at county level and explained how priorities are often a difficult problem to resolve. Mr. George Cobbett, a member of the local Road Safety Committee, stated what had been done at local level and put forward suggestions about street lighting which will be taken up with the appropriate authority. Mr. Ted Moss spoke of the need to ginger up authority and to tackle the problem of road accidents as a whole. He gave the opinion that road-fund taxation for heavy goods vehicles should be stiffened, to put goods back on the railways and other forms of transport, thus relieving roads such as Bridge High Street.

From the floor came regrets that Sir Leslie Thomas was not present. Mr. Ross explained that Sir Leslie was engaged elsewhere. From Councillor H. T. Price came the proposal of a resolution "that this Meeting urges the Minister of Transport, as an interim road safety measure, to provide traffic lights at the junction of Patricbourne Road and High Street, Bridge, and to reinstate the pedestrian crossing across the High Street at this point - these being the minimum measures to combat the heavy and increasing traffic through the village". This has been forwarded to Mr. E. Marples. Of the other suggestions made at the meeting, you will receive reports in due course when the suggestions have been investigated.

The main point that arises from the meeting is that all action must be directed at the Ministry of Transport. The County Council is doing all it can, and giving our campaign every sympathy. We must hammer relentlessly at the

AFTER THE PROTEST MARCH

Kentish Observer. 7-4-1964

VILLAGERS CALL FOR SAFETY MEASURES

The Man Behind Bridge's Campaign

John Purchese, aged 39, organiser of the Bridge Bypass Campaign, lives in the village with his wife and five children. This dynamic, bearded, mild-mannered man is a sound mixer engaged on T.V. films produced by British and American companies.

For eight years he was films consultant to the British Red Cross Society's publicity department, and he is a shop steward in the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians — the film worker's union.

He first took up the cause of the village's dangerous High Street, when a man was killed in an accident outside the Village Hall. Since then, he has met opposition and official procrastination with a wry but determined humour.

Each letter he has written to the Ministry has been answered by a different minor official. So now he heads his letters "For circulation to" each official with whom he has had correspondence, begins them "Gentlemen" instead of "Dear Sir," and addresses them to "The Ministry Group."

He hopes satire may eventually prick Whitehall into action.

He says he has found it difficult to get any action from local Conservative officials, and showed reporters a letter he received from the local Conservative Association which states, "I would have thought it better to keep politics out of this subject; it is purely administration."

"I am not anti-Conservative," says Mr. Purchese, but he maintains that local communities' problems are, ipso facto, political questions.

He is determined to get someone to take some kind of action.

Councillor Urges Combined Action By Six Villages

LABOUR AND LIBERAL PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES, A COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND A ROAD SAFETY OFFICER WERE ON THE PLATFORM AT THE PUBLIC PROTEST MEETING IN BRIDGE VILLAGE HALL ARRANGED BY THE BRIDGE BYPASS CAMPAIGN ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

And there was a place set at the speakers' table for another interested party: a Ministry of Transport official spokesman. But the man from the Ministry did not come.

Another invited guest who was conspicuous by his absence was Sir Leslie Thomas, Canterbury's Conservative M.P.

"Why isn't Sir Leslie here?"

demanded an angry speaker from the floor. Mr. John Williamson, of Beech Mount, Conyngham Lane, Bridge.

COMBINED ATTACK

"He has a prior engagement," replied County Councillor A. J. Ross, who came to his stead.

It was Councillor Ross who

suggested that the Bridge com-

mittee get together with five

other Kent villages who also

have traffic problems — Bough-

ton, Harbledown, Temple

Ewell, Lydden and Kearsney —

— in the hope that a combined

attack on Whitehall would

produce more results than a

sole effort.

The meeting agreed to this.

Proposals to restore Bridge's

pedestrian crossing, and to press

for traffic lights, were followed

by limit signs at the ends of the

village were passed; but the one

proposal that nobody suggested

was that the campaign should

press for a bypass. And this

was odd because, after all, the

meeting had been called by the

Bridge Bypass Campaign.

HE SYMPATHISED

Councillor Ross told the vil-

lagers that he sympathised with

them, and had in fact been

fighting "the permanent officials

in Whitehall" to get conditions

on the road improved for years.

Sir Leslie Thomas, too, was

doing all he could to improve

matters, he said.

He is not sure that the time

has not arrived when you might

approach the other villages —

Boughton, Harbledown, Temple

Ewell, Lydden and Kearsney —

to see if they will join you in a

protest, and see if the Minister

will receive a delegation from

the six villages," said the Coun-

cillor.

This was such a serious mat-

ter that it needed the combined

help of everyone, no matter

what his political colour, to

bring it to a successful con-

clusion.

33RD ON LIST

Sir Leslie Thomas had com-

mented that Bridge was only

53rd on the list of traffic "black spots" in Kent. This was correct, and it indicated that the efforts of the Bridge villagers alone might not be sufficient to produce results.

"This is a political issue," Mr.

Ted Moss told the villagers.

"Your protest is a protest

against Government policy.

Permanent officials in White-

hall merely carried out the

polices laid down by the

Government of the day, he said,

and the only way to ensure that

those policies were changed was

to change the Government.

He pledged that, if he was

elected to represent Canterbury in Parliament, he would

personally make it his business to "plague and badger" the Minister of Transport

until he got some action on

Bridge's problem.

The Labour parliamentary

candidate, Mr. George Cobbett,

said he would be "very grateful"

to hear of any suggestions for

the best way of improving

traffic conditions in Bridge High

Street.

A BLOODBATH?

A questioner from the floor referred to the fact of Bridge's low place on the "black spot" list, and asked, "Am I to assume that we have got to have a bloodbath before we get anything done?"

Answered Mr. Ted Moss,

"Yes, sir!"

Councillor H. D. Price, Chairman of Bridge Parish Council and also a Bridge-Blean Rural District councillor, proposed that the campaign press for a pedestrian crossing and traffic lights. His proposition was carried.

Also carried was a proposal by Mr. John Williamson that the campaign press for signs to be erected at either end of the village warning motorists that they were approaching a danger spot or at least proclaiming "Bridge welcomes careful drivers."

Mr. Purchese warned that the Ministry of Transport had already refused permission for "black spot" signs.

NOT EXHAUSTED

And he replied to a suggestion from Councillor Ross that the campaign had exhausted all the possibilities for bringing the village's problem to the attention of the Ministry with the single word, "No."

And at an impromptu press conference after the meeting, Mr. Purchese warned reporters that they might find their weeks ends occupied very frequently throughout the summer.

The chair at the meeting was taken by Mr. T. D. Smith, Bridge-Blean R.D.C.'s Road Safety Officer.

BACKGROUND ON BRIDGE

According to the Bypass Campaign, Bridge's population is now not far short of 1,000. Between July 1st, 1958 and June 30th, 1963, the Ministry of Transport have said that there were 20 accidents involving personal injury in Bridge High Street. Five people were killed, nine were seriously injured and 19 slightly injured in these accidents. This was before the opening of the M2.

There are no pedestrian crossings or traffic lights in the village, but a school crossing patrol was recently instituted.

A Bloodbath Before Anything Is Done?

Asks Bridge Villager

"Are we to have a bloodbath before anything is done?" asked a Bridge villager at Saturday's meeting to discuss the road traffic problem.

After a series of speeches by political candidates and councillors, the meeting failed to find common ground to solve the problem of eight fatal accidents in five years.

A cattle grid across the A2 at either end of the village, traffic lights at the Beksbourne Road junction, accident black spots—signs and finally the bypass. These were the things discussed.

On the platform were Mr. Ted Moss (Liberal Parliamentary candidate), Mr. George Cobbett (Labour Parliamentary candidate), Cllr. A. J. Ross (representing Sir Leslie Thomas, the Conservative M.P.), Mr. John Purchese (the meeting's organiser) and Mr. J. D. Smith (chairman), who is the local Road Safety Officer. In the main body of the hall were about 40 villagers.

Also on the platform was an empty chair—put there for the spokesman of the Ministry of Transport, who had declined an invitation to attend.

Stronger Action?

The meeting was opened by Mr. Purchese, who said he would like to see some stronger action from Sir Leslie Thomas. Bridge was asking for a safer road through the village.

"We know our by-pass is coming eventually, but we will not wait. We want crossings, lights or anything that can be put up overnight if only the Ministry will put their minds to it," he said.

Cllr. A. J. Ross said he had been trying for the past four years to get something done for Bridge. He had been trying to get a new road. Twice he thought he had got what he

wanted, but the Ministry had come along to alter things.

Then there had been a scheme for a new motor road from Brenley Corner to Dover. There were several meetings about it, but it was said that until the Channel Tunnel question was settled there could be no discussion about that road.

New Road

The last thing he had heard was that they would extend the Maidstone bypass to the tunnel entrance, building a new road to link the end of the M2 motorway and the A20.

"If these new roads are to be built, then all the allocation of money for Kent's roads building programme will go on them," he said.

Cllr. Ross pointed out that he had heard from a policeman that since the motorway had opened traffic from Brenley Corner had increased by 47 per cent.

Many people who had used the A20 now used the M2. He thought that something had to be done to improve matters.

"I'm not sure," he said, "that the time has not arrived that you might tackle the problem with the other villages involved—Boughton, Harbledown, Lydden and others—to see if they will join you in a joint protest. I feel that with such a serious matter you want everybody's help, irrespective of politics."

Dangerous Place

Said Mr. Cobbett: "Bridge is undoubtedly a very dangerous place in which to live. It appears that the risk of death on the road in Bridge is 15 times greater than in the country as a whole. This danger is increasing, particularly this year which will feel the effect of the Dartford to Purfleet Tunnel and the M2 coming into full use for the first full year.

"Bridge has already lost a considerable amount of amenity value before the road safety factor became so intolerable as it is today," he went on. "There has been more than enough time for this problem to have been settled."

Mr. Moss said that Bridge's protest was one against Government policy which decided the future of trunk roads.

"To continue to permit, in increasing numbers, the modern lethal weapons of heavy trucks, coaches and motor cars in such close proximity to vulnerable flesh and blood pedestrians, is suicidal," he said.

Roads Policy

Having outlined the Liberal roads policy, Mr. Moss said, "I understand that Bridge just isn't in the bloodstained county league table of road deaths that has been quoted by Sir Leslie Thomas. What an indictment of Government road policy that there are 52 more towns and villages in this county alone with traffic problems far more deadly than those of Bridge."

"How many more families must suffer bereavement before dormant consciences are aroused?" and we as a nation insist that immediate steps be taken to avert the slaughter on our roads?"

During question time, Cllr. Ross said that now that the Channel Tunnel was to have its entrance at Westenhanger, it could be expected that the A20 would become the major road and the M2 and Thanet Way would fulfil the need of taking traffic to Margate and Ramsgate.

A by-pass for Bridge would cost about £1 million and nobody could expect the Government to go about the country spending money on by-passes like that without the most careful consideration.

"There are," he continued, "hundreds of villages in the country in the same position as Bridge. If by-passes are to be

provided for all of them, the taxpayer will become bankrupt."

A villager who asked why Sir Leslie Thomas was absent was told that he was at another engagement.

A resolution calling for traffic lights at the junction of Beksbourne Road with the A2 was carried.

Mr. Purchese said that it was intended shortly to carry out a 24-hour census of traffic using the road through the village. He would also take up the question of approaching other villages about a joint protest. And his last word to villagers?

"Please be careful, as you go out of the door!"

THE CITY AS I SEE IT

A weekly commentary on local events

BY MALCOLM MITCHELL

THE campaign at Bridge for a by-pass hots up. And, oddly enough, Canterbury's Conservative agent, Cllr. Ted Brown, has done a little to keep things at boiling point.

He was approached by the organiser of protests, Mr. John Purchese, to secure the attendance of Sir Leslie Thomas, the Conservative M.P., at Saturday's meeting in Bridge Village Hall.

It was pointed out that the Liberal and Labour viewpoints were to be put by the prospective Parliamentary candidates, Mr. Ted Moss and Mr. George Cobbett, respectively.

What was Cllr. Brown's reply? A most astounding statement—and, for one so shrewd, a trifling idiotic.

In a letter to Mr. Purchese on March 13, Cllr. Brown said: "I would have thought it better to keep politics out of this subject. It is purely administration."

Cllr. Brown, I'm sure you need neither myself nor Mr. Purchese to point out that the body responsible for administering the country's road system is the Government. Be it Conservative, Socialist, Liberal or Communist controlled, it is a question for the Government. And today, even locally, what is Government over a question of politics?

I am surprised that you should have made such a naive statement.

More about Bridge

I was a little disappointed in the meeting on Saturday. After the effective demonstrations that have taken place in the village, one would have expected something definite to have come out of a protest meeting of villagers.

But what did we get? The only concrete demand was for traffic lights at the Beksbourne Road junction. For the life of me I cannot see how this is going to stop motorists speeding down either of the hills into the village and getting into the same trouble as they do now.

What else was suggested? Well, one villager thought the most effective way of deterring speeding drivers would be to put cattle grids across the roads on either hill! It was also suggested that they might press for accident black spot signs. But all agreed it was a waste of time—planning permission would never be granted.

But, whatever happened to all the talk that has been going on about demanding a by-pass for the village? One villager suggested it—but it was passed over quickly and was never put to the meeting as a substantive proposition. Seems to

me that the meeting was all a waste of villagers' time—and mine.

And just a little more

It is fair to say that the Ministry of Transport has not come out of the Bridge affair in any good light. They declined to send a spokesman to Saturday's meeting. Fair enough. But there seems to have been one hell of a lot of buck passing going on in Whitehall. I don't know how many letters Mr. Purchese has written to the Ministry.

But to know that six different people have answered them, it looks as though they have fed up with the whole affair and then passes it on quickly.

So when Mr. Purchese writes now to the Ministry he addresses his letters to all six and starts off with "Gentlemen." That way I hope that my message is getting to the right person," he told me on Saturday.

BRIDGE PRESSES ON WITH ROAD-SAFETY CAMPAIGN

THEY don't know very much about Bridge Village in Whitehall. To the men in the Ministry of Transport, it is a file number—HGP/14/42/068.

Bridge is not a paper town. It is a down-to-earth place of 900 people on the London-Dover A2.

Because it is not very high up on the Ministry's death-chart, the village has no by-pass, no black-spot signs, no traffic lights, no pedestrian crossings.

Two weeks ago the villagers staged a mock funeral procession along the High Street in protest against road conditions, and on Saturday they went to a meeting in the village hall.

There was a place on the platform for a man from the Ministry, but his chair was empty. A letter from Whitehall talked about "nothing more we can do..." etc. etc.

The people of Bridge were told that only a "bloodbath" would earn them priority, although five have died and more than a score have been seriously injured on the A2 at Bridge since 1958.

But they also learned that Bridge is not alone in its fight against red tape. They may join up with five other villages—Boughton, Harbledown, Lydden, Temple Ewell, and Kearsney—in a joint appeal to the Ministry to do something about the ever-increasing danger on the A2 between its junction with the M2, and Dover.

County Councillor Mr. A. J. Ross told the meeting that since the M2 was opened, traffic from Brenley Corner to Canterbury had increased by 47 per cent.

"You might well approach the five other villages to get them in a joint protest to ask the Minister to receive a deputation," said Mr. Ross.

Mr. John Purchese said Temple Ewell were contemplating a protest march down the A2 during the peak summertime traffic. The entire road from Brenley Corner was in a most deplorable state, he said.

Mr. Ted Moss, Liberal prospective Parliamentary candidate for the Canterbury divi-

sion, said the Government permitted one of the most important trunk roads in the country to go right through the centre of a thriving community.

Bridge was not in the bloodstained table of road deaths.

"What a complete indictment of their road policy that there are 52 more places in this county alone with a problem far more deadly, in the true sense of the word; than Bridge.

"How many more families have to be bereaved before we insist that immediate steps be taken to avert this appalling slaughter?" he asked.

Mr. George Cobbett, Socialist prospective Parliamentary candidate for the division, said the risk of death on the road in Bridge, in relation to the population, was 15 times greater than in the country as a whole.

He declared: "The M2 is an unfinished piece of work. We have got to take it down to Dover in order to complete the job."

Footnote: In a pamphlet given to villagers, Mr. Purchese said Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P. for Canterbury, had promised to ask the Minister a question in the Commons about Bridge High Street. File HGP/14/42/068 is expected to grow and grow.

Kent Messenger 16.4.1968



THE EMPTY CHAIR reserved for the man from the Ministry of Transport is third from the left. Speaking is Mr. George Cobbett, and seated (left to right) are Mr. Ted Moss, Mr. J. D. Smith (road safety officer, Bridge-Blean Council, the chairman, Mr. John Purchese, and Mr. A. J. Ross.



VILLAGERS OF BRIDGE who attended the protest meeting on road safety in the village hall on Saturday.

Kent Messenger 16.4.68

MUST THERE BE A BLOOD BATH?

Protest village steps up fight for safety

THERE will have to be a blood-bath in the village of Bridge, near Canterbury, before safety measures are taken to prevent traffic speeding through the winding main street, anxious villagers were told on Saturday.

The villagers had been called together by the Bridge By-pass Campaign, headed by Mr. John Purchese. He said he had continually pressed the Ministry of Transport to provide safety measures, but had been refused every time.

The campaigners have been active for some time, pressing for more safety for the villagers of Bridge, which straddles the A2 trunk road on the route to Dover.

Mr. Purchese and campaign secretary, Brian Lewis, called Saturday's meeting to follow up their successful protest march on Easter Sunday, when holiday traffic was halted for

"If these roads are to be built

hundreds of yards in both directions.

Speakers were Mr. Purchese, Mr. A. J. Ross, the village's county councillor, Mr. George Cobbett, prospective Labour parliamentary candidate for the division, and Mr. Ted Moss, prospective Liberal parliamentary candidate. The Ministry of Transport was invited to attend, but declined.

In reply to a questioner, Mr. Moss said the position was that if several people were killed in the village something would probably be done. "It is true that if we have a blood-bath the Ministry will sit up and start taking notice."

Eight people have been killed by traffic in Bridge during the past five years. Mr. Purchese said he had asked the Ministry if "Black Spot" signs could be erected—but it had refused.

Mr. Ross, a member of Bridge-Blean Rural Council, said he had been trying to get something done for the village for four years. His efforts had been thwarted, and the latest proposal was that the Maidstone bypass would be extended to the mouth of the proposed Channel Tunnel, and a link road would be built from the M2 to the A20.

"There has been more than enough time for this matter to be settled—whatever the problems have been."

Mr. Moss said the protest was in fact against the current transport policy, which allowed one of its most important trunk roads to go through a thriving community of people. "This is suicidal," he said.

"It is the appalling lack of urgency that worries me. How many more families have got to suffer bereavement before something is done?"

A villager said that someone would be killed very soon if nothing was done. "If a bus comes down the hill and crashes we will have a by-pass sooner than we think," he said.

Mr. H. D. Price, chairman of the parish council and a member of Bridge-Blean Council, suggested the erection of traffic lights at the Bekesbourne cross-roads, and this was adopted. It will be put to the Ministry of Transport.

Kent Messenger 16.4.68



From Anthony Wedgwood Benn M.P.

8 April 1964

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Thank you for sending me the material about the Bridge By-Pass Campaign. I have sent this on to George Strauss M.P. who is our spokesman on Transport.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Wedgwood Benn



10th April, 1964.

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Tony Wedgwood-Benn has passed your letter to me as the Party's Front Bench Spokesman on transport matters.

I read carefully all you say and I wish I could help. But it is very difficult to see how I or my Parliamentary colleagues can do so. We have constantly brought before us similar and no doubt equally justifiable complaints from all over the country, to say nothing of the equally strong and numerous protests about proposed Beeching closures. But these matters cannot be effectively debated or certainly settled in Parliament. All we can do is to express publicly there our criticism of the Minister's actions, and even then the opportunities for doing so are infrequent. The only effective protest action which can be taken in such matters as the road traffic danger at Bridge is through the Local Authorities and the pressure of public opinion on these Authorities, and I see you are doing everything possible in that direction.

I am however most grateful to you for sending us your letter and the enclosed leaflet, as the more detailed evidence we can get of the country's road traffic and road safety problems, the better equipped we are to pursue these matters in the Commons.

Yours sincerely,

G.R. Strauss

The Rt. Hon. G.R. Strauss, M.P.

RESTRICTED.

Bridge-Blean Rural District Council.

J. F. SOILLEUX, D.M.A.
CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

TELEPHONE,
CANTERBURY 66411 (2 LINES)

My ref: H5/60/1/1

Dear Mr. Purchese,

London - Dover Road, A.2.

Thank you for your letter of the 5th April.

You may be interested to know that the District Council is attempting to penetrate the same fog as yourselves, but of course in rather a more orthodox manner and in respect of the whole length of the road from Brenley Corner to Dover.

I think therefore that it would be better if the District Council acted ostensibly on their own, but behind the scenes you might keep me informed of any progress you may make. I, on my side, will reciprocate.

The only person I know who may be interested in joining forces with you is Mrs. I. Allworthy of 41 Highfield Close, Harbledown, and I suggest you approach her, as I feel sure she will help in some way or other.

Yours sincerely,

J. Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank",
High Street,
Bridge,
Near Canterbury, Kent.

S/JA

William
Clerk.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telegrams: Transmirey, London, Telex
Telephone: WATERLOO 7999, ext.

7th April, 1964

Our reference: G.T.I.
Your reference:

Dear Sir

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of

5th April addressed to the
Minister.

Your letter has been passed to the Minister's
Divisional Road Engineer at the above
address

for his attention.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese

J. Purchese, Esq.,
Bridge Bypass Campaign.

Canterbury Division Conservative and Unionist Association

Parliamentary Representative: SIR LESLIE THOMAS, M.B.E., T.D., M.P.

President Alderman Mrs. G. R. Hews, C.B.E.
Chairman L. E. Hart, Esq., J.P.
Hon. Treasurers U. H. B. Alexander, Esq.
E. Parker, Esq., C.B.E., F.C.A.
Asst. Hon. Treasurer P. T. C. Wright, Esq.

Agent and Secretary E. C. F. Brown

9, Hawks Lane,
Canterbury.

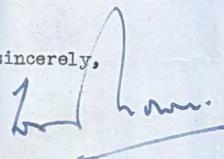
Telephone: Canterbury 64187

8th April, 1964.

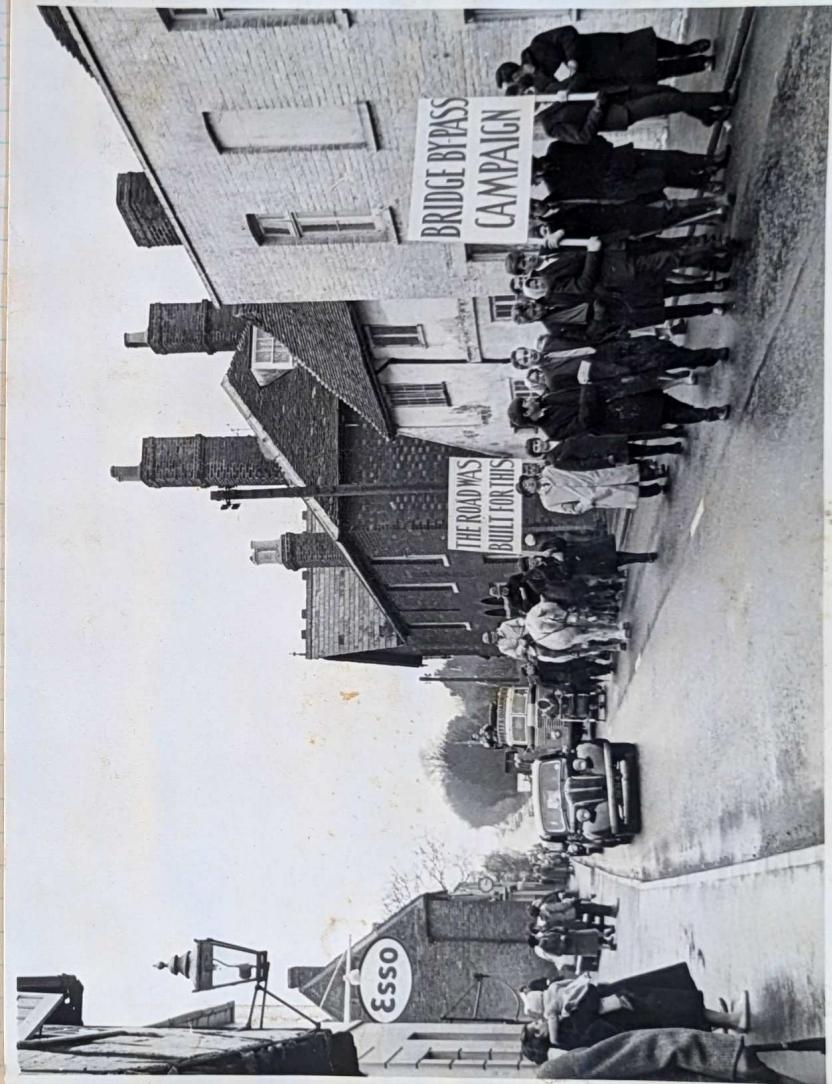
Dear Mr. Purchese,

It seems from the Kentish Observer of the 7th April and the Kent Herald of the 8th April, that you showed my letter to you of 13th March to the press after your meeting last Saturday. This letter was not written for publication and the law holds that the copyright of a letter is vested in the writer. I would be obliged if, in the future, should you wish a letter for publication you will let me know before hand, otherwise I shall expect you to observe the common courtesies in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



J. Purchese, Esq.,
Rose Bank,
High Street,
BRIDGE,
Nr. Canterbury.



13.4.1964

The Agent & Secretary,
Canterbury Division Conservative
and Unionist Association,
9, Hawks Lane,
Canterbury, Kent.

Dear Mr. Brown,

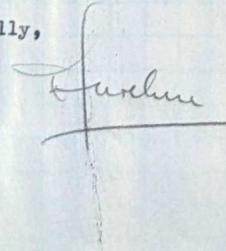
I wonder if you would be so kind as to pass on the Campaign's sincere thanks to Cllr. A.J. Ross who represented Sir Leslie Thomas at the meeting held on April 4th., 1964.

It was a great pleasure to meet him, and to hear of the work he has done in the County Council chamber towards road safety along A2. I am sure he will be interested to learn that we have taken his advice in joining up forces with the other villages and preliminary correspondence has already been received on the matter.

Thank you for your letter dated April 8th. in which you point out that you would have written differently had you known the letter was going to appear in the local press. I am sorry that you have been put in such a predicament since naturally I assumed you said to me what you would gladly acknowledge publicly - however I must point out that my file of correspondence is openly available to anyone who has an interest in the matter. Not only have the Press read all in it, but so has an Inspector of Police, both the Labour and Liberal Candidates and a host of others. It was offered to Sir Leslie Thomas to read when I saw him on 20.7.1963.

Sir Leslie Thomas wrote recently that he shortly hoped to have some news, and the Ministry has recently told me that they are passing on some information to him. I wonder if you could arrange a meeting with him, so that I might pursue the matter. A Saturday would be preferable. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



13.4.1964

Mrs. I. Allworthy,
41, Highfield Close,
Harbledown,
Canterbury, Kent.

Dear Mrs. Allworthy,

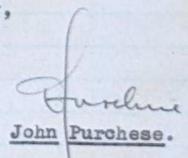
I recently contacted the Bridge-Blean R.D.C. on the suggestion of Cllr. A.J. Ross, to see if there were private people eager to press the Ministry of Transport about the village black-spots on the A2 between Brenley Corner and Dover - and in the case of Bridge-Blean R.D.C., the portion of Harbledown in their care was the primary interest.

Mr. I.F. Soilleux kindly replied, giving me your name as that of a person very interested in reducing the traffic danger at Harbledown. What has been envisaged is a protest, possibly a deputation to the Ministry, of interested persons from Boughton, Harbledown, Bridge, Kearsney, Temple Ewell and Lydden.

As yet I have not heard from the Dover R.D.C.; but in the meantime, could I ask you if you are willing to represent the interests of Harbledown in any action designed to bring to the Minister's attention most forcibly the feelings of those forced to live on the main artery to the Continent ?

The various R.D.C.'s and Faversham Corporation, to whom I have also written, are of course pressing through official channels. What we at Bridge are hoping to form is an unofficial but vocal group who will eventually see improvements in A2.

Yours sincerely,


John Purchese.

The Secretary,
The Ministry of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

HGP/14/42/068

Dear Sir,

I would be obliged to know whether you are relying on the intervention of St. Christopher, your Patron Saint, in the prevention of accidents in Bridge High Street this summer.

This is a serious question, requiring an answer. I am asking it because I can see nothing being done by the Ministry of Transport to make safer this road, and having eliminated the obvious I have to accept the remaining theory - as a certain gentleman once pointed out.

If the Ministry had sent a representative to the Public Meeting held a fortnight ago he would have heard a questioner from the floor ask whether there had to be a bloodbath at Bridge before something was done - to which the answer came from one of the politicians on the platform, "Yes, Sir!".

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese.

16.4.1964

18.4.1964

Dear Gentlemen of the Ministry,

My husband is the Organiser of the Bridge By-Pass Campaign. No doubt the name at the end of this letter will be familiar to some of you as I know he has corresponded with you frequently on this matter - for over two years.

I know that I speak for all the mothers who live in Bridge. We are desperately worried about the ever-increasing danger to our children from the lunatic motorists who treat our village street as a racetrack. Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., recently wrote a letter to the Kentish Gazette. In it he said that "Happily" Bridge is not one of the first 50 worst places in Kent. Apart from shuddering to think of the unfortunate people who have to endure life in those 52 places rated as worse than Bridge (for to say the least of it they must be hell) I am puzzled. Happily for whom I wonder ? For us ? Or for the next crash victim ? Perhaps he or she could be classed as a human sacrifice to allocate a few more points and put us in 52nd. place. Or perhaps, happily for the Gentlemen at the Ministry who can continue to sit back and murmur the usual platitudes and do - nothing.

It is quite inconceivable that in this day and age it is seemingly impossible to get any action to make the main road to Dover a little safer. Why can we not have some traffic lights ? Surely one set each end of the village street would not stretch the Nation's budget too far. This at least would slow the traffic down and limit the number of vehicles in the village at one time. No doubt there is some excellent reason why this is not possible, and I would be glad to hear it.

Without meaning any disrespect, I wonder how the Ministerial wives would like to have to push their babies in prams along a pavement 32" wide, with a huge lorry or a petrol tanker racing through and practically brushing their coatsleeves ? Believe me, Gentlemen, it is very frightening.

We dare not let our children walk along the village street without an adult in attendance for fear that they might stumble into the road and be crushed under the wheels of some vehicle.

Faith, it is said, can move mountains; Ministries may take a little longer. Our By-Pass Campaign slogan is "Never take No! for an answer".

Yours faithfully,

*M.J. Purchese
M.J. Purchese (Mrs)*

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

To the Editor of the Kent Herald.

Dear Sir,—
If I had realised that Mr. Purchese wished my letter of March 13 to be for use in the Press, I would have made abundantly clear the differences between politics and party politics so that even your reporter, Malcolm Mitchell, could have appreciated the difference.

I am well aware that the Government of the day is responsible for administering the trunk roads and the motorways in this country. This, as is said to Mr. Purchese in my letter of March 13, is a matter of administration and I cannot see how any party in its national manifesto is going to discuss the question of a by-pass for Bridge.

Mr. Moss, the Liberal candidate, is, of course, blatantly using the campaign for a Bridge by-pass to further his Parliamentary career. Mr. Cobbett is doing the same thing, but in a trifle more adult way. Both these gentlemen can play this game as neither has the slightest chance of being elected to represent this constituency. With the sitting Member, Sir Leslie Thomas, it is a different matter and he has chosen not to play party politics but to do what he can to try and get Bridge's traffic problem alleviated.

One member of the audience at the meeting last Saturday asked both political candidates what approaches they had made to their Shadow Cabinets. The answer, that they had done nothing, puts their efforts in perspective.

If Mr. Purchese had wanted Sir Leslie Thomas to attend his meeting, it would have been courtesy for him to have found out on which date Sir Leslie could attend, but Mr. Purchese doesn't do things this way. He fixes the date and then demands your presence.

Sir Leslie Thomas would be perfectly prepared to attend, on a date suitable for him, a meeting at Bridge to which those affected by the present traffic problem could be invited. He would then be able to discuss with them the approaches he has made to the Ministry, the chances of obtaining the by-pass for Bridge and to hear their views and suggestions.

This, I would suggest to Mr. Purchese, would be the proper way of getting something moving in the matter and of putting the local residents in the picture, but Sir Leslie Thomas is not going to have this matter thrown into a General Election debate and provide a platform for Mr. Cobbett and Mr. Moss which they could not otherwise obtain.

E. C. F. BROWN,
Agent and Secretary,
Canterbury Division
Conservative and Unionist
Association.



BOROUGH OF FAVERSHAM
MUNICIPAL OFFICES
FAVERSHAM
TOWN CLERK
F. G. BISHOP
SOLICITOR
FAVERSHAM 2313/4

Ref: H/1/FGB

14th April, 1964

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of the 5th instant. I am wondering whether you addressed your letter to me under the impression that the village of Boughton comes within ~~the~~ area. In fact it is within the area of the Swale Rural District Council whose Offices are situated at Sittingbourne.

Yours faithfully,

Town Clerk

John Purchese Esq.,
Organiser,
Bridge By-Pass Campaign,
"Rosebank",
High Street,
Bridge.

19.4.1964

Please address copy directly to
DIRECTOR OF ROAD RESEARCH

and quote: 14/37/51/1223/2
Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE., TD., MP.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

John Purchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank",
Dear Sir,

Bridge. Thank you very much for you on
Saturday April 18th. at your office in Canterbury
of useful information was exchanged.

You will recall that you as
statistics quoted to you that were supplied by
Safety Officer for Bridge. The figures supplied
Mr. Smith just prior to the Easter Sunday Protest
village were 1959-1963, 8 dead, 27 seriously in
ed.

In view of the Ministry figures
same period being somewhat different, you requested
Smith for his source of figures. This, today, I
assured me that the source was reputable, he was
further details for reasons of confidence. In
circumstances it would be a little difficult for
further with Mr. Smith, who resides at 4, The Te
ed.

Possibly, Sir, asking for more
figures would clear the air on this particular as
the final incontrovertible records (or so one sup
ed.

It has just been pointed out
has advised, in a letter to the local Press, that he
be perfectly prepared to attend on a date suitable
Bridge to which those affected by the present tra
invited. He would then be able to discuss with them
made to the Ministry, the chances of obtaining the by-pass
to hear their views and suggestions." The letter
out that this would be the proper way of getting the
matter.

Naturally I applaud your Agent's
proposed to him in my answering letter in this regard
commence his arrangements for such a meeting as such
more pressing matters this month in Canterbury.

Yours sincerely,

John

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~~RESTRICTED~~

Dover Rural District Council



A. SYRETT, M.B.E., D.M.A., F.C.C.S.
CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

TELEPHONE: KEARNSNEY 23112

Dear Sir,

Trunk Road A.2.

Thank you for your letter of the 5th instant, notifying me of the Bridge By-Pass Campaign.

This Council has for many years, through its Road and Home Safety Committee, been concerned at the dangerous conditions on that part of the Trunk Road A.2. lying within this Rural District, and representations have consistently been made to the appropriate authorities with a view to the improvement of such conditions. It does appear, from recent statements, that the pressure of public opinion has at last had an effect, because I understand that the Ministry of Transport have now agreed to the preparation of a scheme for the widening of the road.

I think the Members of the Council might well individually have considerable sympathy for your efforts, but you will appreciate, I am sure, that the Council as a body must confine its activities to its own area.

A great many people are interested in the future of the Trunk Road as you can imagine, but I am afraid I am unable to suggest anyone whom you could approach in the manner you suggest.

Yours faithfully,

Clerk of the Council

John Purchese, Esq.,
Organiser,
Bridge By-Pass Campaign,
"Rosebank", High Street,
Bridge, Nr. Canterbury.

COUNCIL OFFICES,
TEMPLE EWELL,
NR. DOVER, KENT

16th April, 1964

Bridge By-Pass Campaign

Bumper Post For Minister

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Ernest Marples) is to have a bumper postbag in the near future. But it won't be fan mail. For the Bridge by-pass will be taking yet another step forward in their demand for a by-pass. They are busy writing letters asking for something to be done to stop the amount of traffic passing through the village. All the letters are being sent to Mr. John Purchese, organiser of the campaign, and then . . . he will post the lot to the Minister of Transport so that the letters arrive on Mr. Marples' desk simultaneously. *K.G. 17.4.64*

Sir Leslie Thomas was seen for twenty minutes on Saturday, April 18th at Hawks Lane. He said that he was seeing the minister during the following week or two, and would be pressing him for action.

Sir Leslie commented that there had been considerable political inflammation in Canterbury as a result of the campaign drawing parties into the matter. I answered that the General Election meant one of three candidates would represent Bridge by the end of the year, and it was desirable to invite the opinions of all interested parties.

THE CITY AS I SEE IT

A weekly commentary on local events

BY MALCOLM MITCHELL

Kent Herald. 22.4.64

ONE thing the organisers of the Bridge by-pass demands have consistently maintained is that traffic on the A2 has been increasing considerably.

What figures had they to go on? Just those supplied by the Ministry of Transport. And these came from a census taken in August, 1961. The figure given was 6,700 vehicles a day at the peak times of August—presumably Bank Holiday and weekends.

So the organisers, John Purchese and Brian Lewis, decided to conduct their own survey. A count was taken during a complete 24-hour period over the weekend.

The result? No less than 7,074 vehicles of various types passed the census point. And this was a very ordinary, rainy weekend in April. You can cut out the holiday traffic, the people rushing to catch boats at Dover, and, perhaps, cars dashing about to summer events in the locality.

Brian Lewis tells me that he contacted Dover Harbour Board to find out if traffic across the Channel was particularly heavy—the answer was "No."

"It seems to me that this census rather strengthens our hand," he told me this week. There is no doubt about it, traffic on the A2 must have increased considerably since the M.2 opened. Canterbury has also felt its effect, with much big-

K.G. 24.4.64

BRIDGE TRAFFIC CENSUS

One thing the organisers of the Bridge by-pass demands have consistently maintained is that traffic on the A2 has been increasing considerably.

What figures had they to go on? Just those supplied by the Ministry of Transport. And these came from a census taken in August, 1961. The figure given was 6,700 vehicles a day at the peak times of August—presumably Bank Holiday and weekends.

So the organisers, John Purchese and Bryan Lewis, decided to conduct their own survey. A count was taken during a complete 24-hour period over the weekend.

The result? No less than 7,074 vehicles of various types passed the census point. And this was a very ordinary, rainy weekend in April.

Said Mr. Lewis: "You can cut out the holiday traffic, the people rushing to catch boats at Dover, and, perhaps, cars dashing about to summer events in the locality. I contacted Dover Harbour Board to find out if traffic across the Channel was particularly heavy—the answer was 'No.'

"It seems to me that this census rather strengthens our hand," he said.

24.4.1964

The Chairman,
Bridge-Blean Road Safety Committee,
Bridge-Blean R.D.C.,
Old Dover Road,
Canterbury, Kent.

Dear Sir,

Recently Mr. J.V. Church, of Tubewrights Limited, Kirkby Industrial Estate, Liverpool, Lancashire, called to see me concerning the dangers of Bridge High Street. Mr. Church is a salesman for his Company who manufacture and erect street furniture of all kinds, including pedestrian bridges.

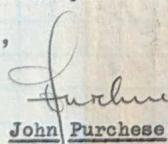
A certain amount of literature, including a pamphlet "Separate Ways To Safety" was left - and this, I felt, was of sufficient interest to forward to your Committee for consideration.

Anything that separates traffic from pedestrians is potentially useful in the matter of Bridge High Street, although against the use of a bridge there are considerations such as expense, looks, the willingness of people to use such a device and in fact the ability of people who are elderly to use it.

Guard railing is also illustrated. If the Ministry were to advocate crossings as a short term measure, then guard rails might well help in between.

There was a meeting between Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., and Mr. G.D. Galbraith, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, yesterday. I am sure we all hope that some real measures were discussed to reduce the traffic menace in the village High Street. Unfortunately I have no information yet of the results.

Yours faithfully,


John Purchese.

BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

To the Editor of the Kent Herald
Dear Sir,

It was illuminating to read Cllr. E. C. F. Brown's brisk denunciation last week of the campaign, the local Press and the politicians not of his party. As an organiser, I am delighted that Cllr. Brown should show such interest, which impresses me a matter of administration. He says that I "demanded" the presence of Sir Leslie Thomas at the public meeting held on April 4, 1964.

The meeting was arranged as a follow-up to the protest march on Easter Sunday, and this dictated the date. The principal speaker would have been the Ministry of Transport spokesman, Sir Leslie Thomas. Mr. Ted Moss and Mr. George Cobbett were invited to be supporting speakers. This is the letter that was written, of which Cllr. Brown complains:

"Dear Mr. Brown,
I tried to contact you at Hawks Lane last Saturday, but failed. I do so understand that you have been unwell - I trust that you are better."

"My reason for writing is to say that a public meeting has been arranged for Saturday, April 4, 1964, at 2.30 p.m. in the Village Hall, Bridge, to discuss the road through the village. In the chair will be the local Road Safety Officer and invited speakers include a spokesman from the Ministry of Transport.

"We also wish to hear the views of each Party, in view of the pending General Election, and would be most pleased if Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., could attend on your behalf."

"There is, I know, only a month's notice - but if Sir Leslie could not manage it I am wondering if some other local Conservative might be persuaded to put your point of view?"

"The agenda is very simple:
1. Welcome from the chair.
2. Brief statement from the organiser of the Bridge By-Pass Campaign.
3. Statements by the political representatives.
4. Statement by the Ministry spokesman.
5. Questions from the floor."

"Considerable interest has been shown in the Bridge area in the statement so kindly given for inclusion in our last publication, and I am sure you will (in some way or another) wish to take advantage of this opportunity."

"Yours faithfully, John Purchese, Organiser."

"Demand?" I think not. Cllr. Brown now has other matters for his attention in Canterbury for some days; when he is free possibly he would arrange the meeting he suggests in his letter. We would all be delighted to hear from Sir Leslie himself what exertions he has undertaken on behalf of his constituents in Bridge.

JOHN PURCHASE,
Organiser.

TEL
CANT 62951

"The Choughs"
41. Highfield Close
Canterbury
Kent.
28.4.64

John Purchese Esq.
Rosebank,
High Street
Bridge

Dear Mr Purchese

Please accept

my apologies for the delay in replying
you, due to pressure of work allocated
to me from various committees.

However I am willing to
help your good cause, but my time
is very limited these days:

Four years ago I worked
hard organising a petition for a Rye
Pass of Canterbury - Bridge - so
when I see an M.P. again
he will recall my previous efforts.
The ministry may well have the
petition - many letters sent by me.

Your sincerely
Tom Allaway (mr)



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

30.4.64

Dear Sir
I have remained
from replying to your
letter until such time as
I had received official
figures of the road accidents
in Bridge in view of the
disparity between those
I gave (also official) you
previously and those quoted
at your meeting.

Yours sincerely
Leslie Thomas

HANSARD.

29 APRIL 1964

Written Answers 64

current general review of the financial relations between local and central government.

Trunk Road, Bridge (Accidents)

Sir L. Thomas asked the Minister of Transport what were the road accident statistics in the village of Bridge, near Canterbury, for the years 1959-63 inclusive.

Mr. Galbraith: There were 23 accidents on the trunk road in the village involving personal injury. Four persons were injured fatally, 13 seriously and 17 slightly.

RAILWAYS

Bridge By-pass

M.P. to Ask Question?

Canterbury's Member of Parliament, Sir Leslie Thomas, is to be asked to put a question in the House of Commons as to when the A2 is likely to be improved—and when Bridge is likely to be by-passed.

Bridge-Blean Rural District Council decided this at their meeting on Wednesday after the Clerk (Mr. I. Soileux) had said that, in view of his "abortive efforts" to obtain information, he had taken up the question with Sir Leslie.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport had told Sir Leslie that there were a number of alternative schemes under consideration, and it was not thought wise to make the various alternatives public at that time.

The Council also decided to apply to the Kent County Council for a pedestrian crossing to be reinstated in Bridge High Street at the junction of Western Avenue and A2.

Bridge Parish Council are to be advised to ask the County Council for a contribution towards improving street lighting in the High Street and will be told that Bridge-Blean Council will support this.

KG.1.564

M2

M.O.T. REF: HGP-14-42-068

DATE: 2.5.1964

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

Organiser: JOHN PURCHASE,
'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

Campaign Sec.: BRIAN A. LEWIS,
1, Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 254

Sir. L.M. Thomas, MBE., TD., MP.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated 30.4.1964, with the enclosed section of Hansard recording your written question and answer regarding the record of injuries on A2 at Bridge between 1959 and 1963. I shall see to it that these figures are brought to the attention of those involved in this matter.

Further steps are being taken to join up the efforts of the villagers at Boughton, Harbledown, Bridge, Lydden, Temple Ewell and Kearsney; to bring pressure to bear on the Ministry of Transport regarding the unsatisfactory road safety on A2 at these points.

The appearance of heavy car transporters on A2, taking new cars to London, has revealed that one large foreign firm has set up office in Dover (having previously been based in London), and receives cars by air across the Channel. The cars are stored temporarily in Dover, to receive certain adjustments, and then are carried to London. It is understood that a number of other car transport firms are planning services from Dover to London. Since up to 12 cars are carried in one load this would appear to be a hazard in the narrow sections of A2 referred to above. If you would like further information, we will see that an enquiry is made.

We would be pleased to hear of any further thoughts on the suggestion of your Agent, that you should address the villagers of Bridge on the matter of road safety.

Yours sincerely,

John Purchase.

M2

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF: HGP-14-42-068

DATE: 2.5.1964

Organiser: JOHN PURCHASE,
'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

Campaign Sec.: BRIAN A. LEWIS,
1, Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 254

Mrs. I. Allworthy,
"The Choughs",
41, Highfield Close,
Canterbury, Kent.

Dear Mrs. Allworthy,

Thank you for your letter dated 28.4.1964 where you speak of your efforts some time ago to bring a By-Pass round Canterbury and Bridge. The Ministry certainly will be holding the correspondence and petition.

Thank you for your offer of help. It is not intended to tax your limited time too hard! At the moment we are sounding out people in all the six villages and sections of A2 who are worried by the dangerous conditions. As soon as sufficient support has been built we are proposing to launch a six village Campaign. That would mean a comprehensive name, and publicity directed to all six danger points. For example, should a march seem desirable, we would launch it at Boughton, carry the people in it to Harbledown to continue the march, and so on down to Dover. This would take a complete afternoon to accomplish and the reluctant Ministry might begin to listen after traffic jams lasting several hours are reported to them.

For the moment, however, I will enter you on our Supporters' file if I may, so that you receive all our bulletins; and more information will be available in due course.

Please write to Sir Leslie Thomas if you can. He will certainly recall your previous correspondence, and it will help to show the weight of public opinion.

Yours sincerely,

John Purchese.
John Purchese.

New Hazard For Bridge

Organisers of the Bridge campaign for a by-pass are worried about a new road safety threat to the village.

Now that the Fiat agency has been transferred to Dover, huge car transporters are using the A2. And the situation is going to worsen, says Mr. Bryan Lewis.

Each of these vehicles carries between eight and 16 cars. At the moment only one firm is operating the ferry service, but we expect shortly there will be six of them.

"On top of that, I hear that there will soon be 23 cross-Channel ferries operating in every 24 hours. This, too, is going to add to the dangers, not only in Bridge, but in the other five villages who are asking for something to be done."

The campaigners are to write to the Minister of Transport pointing out the new hazards.

Kentish Gazette, May 15, 1964

BRIDGE SAFETY CAMPAIGN

To the Editor,—

Is it not about time the Ministry of Transport ceased to play "dead and loose" with the residents of Bridge and gave them some positive statements of official action which would make the High Street a safer place? It appears, however, that eight deaths and 49 injuries over a period of five years does not justify any action from the Ministry, who must, apparently, see a massacre before they act.

With the onset of summer, Dover expects the continental traffic to rise considerably and it can be seen that Bridge, lying on the A2 between Dover and Canterbury, will feel the effects of that rise. Seven thousand and seventy-four vehicles passed through the village on a wet weekend during April and 50 per cent seasonal increase is not unusual.

Children, and old people from The Close, are endangered by traffic coming through the village, quite often at speeds in excess of the 30 m.p.h. restriction imposed on the road.

Considering the above facts, I fail to see the point made by a correspondent calling himself "Local Yokel", who, in your edition of March 26, 1964, likened a by-pass to "throwing old tins into a neighbour's garden. Admittedly, Bridge doesn't want the traffic, because how can one expect a road only 18ft. 6in. wide in places to contend with heavy traffic for which it was not designed? I feel that a more appropriate likeness to the situation is "bolting the stable door before the donkey escapes."

However, you can assure "Local Yokel" that I did take his advice to plant "your taters on Good Friday."

ANGRY YOUNG MAN.
KG. 8.5.64

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

To the Editor,—

Cllr. A. J. Ross, at a public meeting held at Bridge on April 4, suggested that the villagers of Boughton, Harbledown, Bridge, Lydden, Kearsney and Temple Ewell should combine in their efforts to achieve safer road conditions on the A2 between Brenley Corner and Dover.

The Bridge By-Pass Campaign welcomed this suggestion and as a move towards creating an A2 GROUP which could penetrate the monumental sloth of the Ministry of Transport with an increased weight of public opinion, now appeals to anyone living in the named traffic danger spots to communicate with the organisers of the Bridge By-Pass Campaign at the address printed at the foot of this letter.

The A2 GROUP will ensure that the present Minister, and any subsequent holder of the office, will be acutely aware of the road dangers that exist and are increasing in these Kentish villages. There is a great deal being said about road safety at the moment, here is something that your readers can do.

JOHN PURCHASE.

Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury. K.G.
24.5.64

'To penetrate
the sloth of
Ministry'

VILLAGERS at Bridge, near Canterbury, who are campaigning for a by-pass to cut accidents on the London-Dover A2, are creating an "A2 Group."

Mr. John Purchese, of Rosebank, High Street, Bridge, told the KENT MESSENGER on Wednesday that their move followed a suggestion from County Councillor Mr. A. J. Ross that the people of Boughton, Lydden, Harbledown, Bridge, Kearsney and Temple Ewell, should unite in their efforts to get safer conditions on the A2 between Brenley Corner and Dover.

Said Mr. Purchese, "The A2 Group could penetrate the monumental sloth of the Ministry of Transport with an increased weight of public opinion.

"The A2 Group will ensure that the present Minister, and any subsequent holder of the office, will be acutely aware of the road dangers that exist and are increasing in these Kentish villages."

K.M. 29.5.64

CHILDREN'S WALK TO SCHOOL

To the Editor.—
In your issue of June 12, Mr. R. J. E. Waye is reported as saying that "the question of danger for children was over-emphasised. On Saturdays and Sundays, when the volume of traffic was considerable, they were allowed to go to the cinema."

When some parents allow their children to do at weekends may be deplorable, but it is their own responsibility. But Bishopsbourne parents with children of school age are compelled to send their children to school along a hazardous road. The responsibility for their children thus becomes that of the Education Committee.

May I say that in my opinion only the careful road training of the children and the skilled driving of the heavy lorries which come along the road from Bridge to Bishopsbourne have prevented serious accidents occurring.

So I was glad to read that consideration is to be given to the matter again, as what parents object to is not so much the distance as the danger.

L. F. GEDDES
(Rector of Bishopsbourne).
The Rectory,
Bishopsbourne, 14.6.64
K.G.

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

To the Editor.—
It would appear that the Ministry of Transport have little, if any, interest in the plight of the residents of Bridge. I say this advisedly in view of the fact that after two months they have not replied to a batch of letters written to them on the subject, and also the fact that they did not send a representative (as they were invited) to a meeting following the Easter Sunday march.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this situation: First, that they have no interest, and/or second, that they are unable to do anything.

Taking the first point, I think that the Ministry have made their "jaisser-faire" attitude quite apparent. On the second point, I feel that their hands are only tied by the "red tape" surrounding their "accident" statistics, which would probably decrease if places such as Bridge were by-passed.

Hirving stated my supposition of the official attitude, let me set out the conditions of road safety under which an increasing number of people are living in the village.

The High Street is part of the London-Dover A2 road, which still carries a high percentage of Continental traffic, which, I might add, passes through the restricted area at speeds far in excess statutory 30 m.p.h. Not only does speed present hazards, but they are added to by the width of the road (18ft. 6ins. wide in places) as well as its winding nature.

K.G. 10.7.64 A. N. OTHER
Local Yodel.

Speeding At Bridge

Six Motorists Fined

Six motorists were fined for speeding through Bridge on May 15, by St. Augustine's magistrates at Canterbury on Wednesday. The court was told that they were caught in a Police radar trap.

They were: Denis Moat, of 23 Shipman Avenue, Canterbury (43 m.p.h.); f5; Arnold G. Fairhead, of 2 Selling Cottages, Adisham (42 m.p.h.); f4; Andrew R. Anderson, of 119 Marshall Road, Rainham (41 m.p.h.); f5; Leonard Hutchinson, of 47 Peleham Road, Gravesend (41 m.p.h.); f5; Michael J. Bottomley, of 109 St. Andrew Road, Coulsdon, Surrey (43 m.p.h.); and David A. Morgan, of 34 Nursery Road, Meopham (44 m.p.h.); f7. 14.6.64 K.G.

It thus becomes apparent that crossing the High Street, in peak times particularly, is something of an adventure which can be dangerous undertaken by the very young and the elderly, not to mention women with prams.

In due course this danger will increase because the population is not static. New housing estates will house more young people, as well as the elderly, who do, of course, need special consideration.

The London-Continental traffic has of late started to constitute motor car transporters, in addition to lorries, buses, coaches, etc. In certain parts of the road mentioned above it is difficult, owing to the camber of the road, for 8ft-wide "double-deck" buses to pass, and for a main trunk road this is an absurd situation.

Although you may have seen the Ministry's "carnage" list of villages on the trunk roads in Kent, I feel that Bridge's position on that list does not reflect the true gravity of the situation. Are eight deaths and 49 injuries in five years not a sufficient toll for a piece of road 300 yards long? Or does it have to be that more lives have to be ruined or completely destroyed for the sake of official compacency?

I feel that every responsible person, irrespective of political conviction, who knows the truth of the situation, should assist the Campaign by writing to the Ministry representing the situation in the strongest possible terms. It can be added that death is as distasteful to us as it is to them, and their physical remoteness from the situation in no way diminishes their responsibility to improve it.

JOHN PURCHASE.

Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge.

K.G. 10.7.64

CHILDREN'S WALK TO SCHOOL

To the Editor.—

Mr. Waye's statement that a boy was conveyed to and from school (presumably at Bridge) from Bridge Hill is interesting. The houses furthest up Bridge Hill are still nearer the school than any house in Bishopsbourne. There would seem to be no reason, therefore, why special facilities could not be provided for Bishopsbourne children, if thought necessary. A rather larger bus is all that is needed.

As it is, all children going to school in Bishopsbourne and some of those going to Bridge are provided with transport. There remain a group aged from five to 11 who do not qualify. In the not-too-distant past, all these children would have gone to school in Bishopsbourne itself.

Now they have to walk along a road with two dangerous stretches where the road winds, the low banks are still high enough to hide a small child from a driver's view and the bend near Bridge has a false camber.

Even an experienced driver, unfamiliar with that stretch, can be caught out—and might

Continued in next column.

Continued from previous column.

well find himself unable to avoid a child. May we have action before that occurs?

As for Mr. Waye's question about what parents would say if their children were forced to cycle along the A2, may I content myself with saying that as no such fantastic suggestion has been put forward by the Education Authorities, discussion of it is irrelevant.

L. F. GEDDES,
Rector of
Bishopsbourne.
The Rectory,
Bishopsbourne. K.G. 3.7.64

Bulletin No. 4.

24th May, 1964.

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

Organiser: John Purchese, "Rosebank", High Street, Bridge. (Bridge 485).

Campaign Secretary: Brian A. Lewis, 1 Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge.

Dear Supporter,

The first Campaign traffic census was carried out on Saturday 18th April and Sunday 19th April, 1964. This was a dull wet weekend, ruling out excessive holiday traffic. The results were as follows:-

TIME	NORTH - To Canterbury.			SOUTH - To Dover.			TOTAL
	Private	Comm.	Heavy Comm.	Private	Comm.	Heavy Comm.	
3-4p.m.	304	29	7	306	34	7	687 S
4-5p.m.	255	28	8	261	24	23	599 A
5-6p.m.	257	25	7	312	32	4	637 T
6-7p.m.	227	27	4	203	22	3	486 U
7-8p.m.	175	22	4	190	18	7	416 R
8-9p.m.	96	11	3	120	16	1	247 D
9-10p.m.	93	7	4	112	5	6	227 A
10-11p.m.	84	9	1	94	6	2	196 Y
11-12p.m.	87	6	1	84	8	-	186
12-1a.m.	60	12	-	60	4	-	136
1-2a.m.	15	-	-	24	2	-	41 S
2-3a.m.	6	2	-	18	-	-	26 U
3-4a.m.	4	-	-	5	-	-	9 N
4-5a.m.	1	-	-	7	-	-	8 D
5-6a.m.	18	3	2	7	2	-	32 A
6-7a.m.	18	3	1	13	9	3	47 Y
7-8a.m.	32	10	2	44	14	4	106
8-9a.m.	40	18	1	62	21	2	144
9-10a.m.	90	11	5	101	12	4	223
10-11a.m.	135	9	5	190	15	4	358
11-12a.m.	148	13	3	218	20	8	410
12-1p.m.	155	20	3	223	17	1	419
1-2p.m.	176	13	3	165	10	3	370
2-3p.m.	273	21	5	301	28	3	631
3-4p.m.	307	20	5	305	17	5	659
4-5p.m.	361	30	8	255	24	4	682
5-6p.m.	330	24	6	206	26	4	596
6-7p.m.	332	37	5	182	13	3	572
7-8p.m.	315	30	4	189	25	5	568
8-9p.m.	238	14	2	169	4	1	428

The first 24 hour period saw a total of 6,645 vehicles, from 9.0 p.m. to 9.0 p.m. however the figures are 7,074. We would remind our supporters that the Ministry of Transport figures quoted for 1961 were 6,700 per day at peak periods. There is a significant increase to be seen.

THE A2 GROUP

M.O.T. REF: HGP-14-42 068

DATE: 13.7.1964

Organiser: John Purchese,
'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge. Tel. Bridge 485.

Campaign Sec.: Brian A. Lewis,
1, Weston Villas, High Street,
Bridge. Tel. Bridge 254.

The Secretary,
The Ministry of Transport,
Southwark Street, London, S.E.1

- for circulation to:- G. Davis, Esq., L. Durrant, Esq., F. Samuel, Esq.,
R. Pearson, Esq., R.L. Pearce, Esq., & G.D. Hewett, Esq. of the Div.
Road Engineer's Dept., ref: RDL/34/6T71.

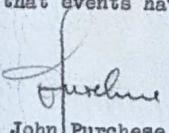
Gentlemen,

You may be somewhat puzzled by the Bridge By-Pass Campaign blossoming in new colours, but the fact is that we were told by a County Councillor, Mr. A.J. Ross, at our meeting in Bridge to which you were invited, that we should broaden our scope and tackle the A2 from Brenley Corner to Dover. This we are now doing, and to launch the affair along we are holding a protest march through Bridge on Sunday July 26th. 1964. At the same time, 2,000 leaflets are being distributed to every house on A2 from the junction of M2/A2 to the outskirts of Dover. Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P. for Canterbury, and Sir John Arbuthnot, M.P. for Dover, have both been informed of these moves; and Sir Leslie Thomas may shortly have a document for your Minister to see.

We are, of course, very sad that you have not replied to any of the letters sent you by a great many people at Easter time, albeit you did acknowledge the letters by card; since a number were from people who felt that you were doing all you could in matter of local road safety, and they have rather indicated since that possibly the Campaign was correct in saying that the Ministry were hardly overactive in the matter.

At all events, our reason for writing is to ask if you have any statement you would like communicated to the readers of our leaflets, or the supporters of our march. We will gladly give you free space for your comments. I, myself, will quite understand if comment is delayed until due consideration has been given the points raised, but I would point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,


John Purchese.

THE A2 GROUP

M.O.T. REF: HGP-14-42 068

DATE: 13.7.1964

Organiser: John Purchese,
'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge. Tel. Bridge 485.

Campaign Sec.: Brian A. Lewis,
1, Weston Villas, High Street,
Bridge. Tel. Bridge 254.

Sir John Arbuthnot, MBE, MP.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

Dear Sir,

The Bridge By-Pass Campaign has been in existence for two years, to bring some measure of safety to the High Street through the village through pressure on the Ministry of Transport. At a public meeting held in Bridge at Easter, it was suggested that we should enlarge our organisation to include the whole of the A2 from Brenley Corner to Dover. The suggestion came from Mr. A.J. Ross, County Councillor for the district.

To launch the larger group - called "The A2 Group" we are sending out leaflets for delivery to every house on A2 from Brenley Corner to the outskirts of Dover and are having a second march through the village of Bridge at the same time.

Since the outskirts of Dover now become part of the road in which we are interested we would like to ask you, as Member for this district, if you have any comments at this stage on the project. We know that you view the A2 situation in Dover as potentially dangerous, with the increase in traffic that has already taken place, and with the threat of further increase - especially of heavy goods vehicles - we feel sure that you would wish that the Ministry would act in the matter.

If you would like further information, or would like to see me, please contact my Secretary, or myself;

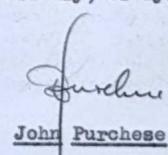
FORM REG. 16.

Our reference HGP 14/42/068

Your reference _____

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
ST. CHRISTOPHER HOUSE,
SOUTHWARK STREET,

LONDON, S.E.1.
Date 15/7/64


John Purchese

The Secretary acknowledges receipt of your letter dated 13th July with enclosure(s), which is receiving attention.

M720108 888

M2

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

M.O.T. REF: MCP-14-42-068

DATE. 13.7.1964

Organiser: JOHN PURCHASE,
'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

Campaign Sec.: BRIAN A. LEWIS,
1, Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 254

Sir J.M. Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

Dear Sir,

At the suggestion of Councillor A.J. Ross, we are now enlarging the scope of the Bridge By-Pass Campaign to cover the whole of A2 from Brenley Corner to Dover, and are changing the name of the organisation to "The A2 Group".

To launch this venture we are arranging for leaflets and cards to be delivered to every house on A2 from the M2 junction to the outskirts of Dover, and have naturally written to Sir John Arbuthnot, Member for the Dover Division, explaining what we are doing. To get the matter going in Bridge, we are due to hold another march on July 26th, at which an aide-memoire to the Minister will be signed by as many supporters as we may conveniently have on the march. This document we propose to pass to you, as our Member of Parliament, for onward transmission to the Minister with whatever comments you may feel the situation demands.

This move, we feel sure, will help you in your contact with the Ministry on the subject - and we look forward to hearing of any success you have in your negotiations.

Thanking you for your interest,

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese
John Purchese.

From: Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.

House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

15th July 1964

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter advising me of the change of name of the organisation. I think it is a very good idea and you are much more likely to get something done if you approach the problem of the A.2 as a whole from Brenley Corner to Dover.

I have already been in touch with the Ministry from this particular point of view and will continue to press them.

Yours sincerely
Leslie Thomas

John Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge.

From: Sir John Arbuthnot, Bt., M.B.E., T.D., M.P.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

15th July 1964

Dear Mr. Purchese,

Thank you for your letter of 13th July about the Bridge By-pass Campaign. As you will appreciate, this is not in my Constituency, but rather in that of Sir Leslie Thomas.

Naturally I am interested in the improvement of the A.2. road in so far as it affects my Constituency, and I do keep in close touch with the Ministry about it. If Mr. Thomas is taking any action, no doubt he will let me know.

Yours sincerely
John Arbuthnot

J. Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Kent.

Kent County Constabulary

TELE: CANTERBURY 8448

13th July 1964

Ref. No.

YOUR REE,



Dear Sir,
R.D. Lemon, Esq.,
Chief Constable of Kent, by the Chief Constable to acknowledge receipt
P.O. Box 11, dated the 13th July.
Police Headquarters,
Sutton Road, Maidstone.
Pleasing that one of our oldest and most
historic roads should have current traffic problems. Unfortunately
Reid is one of so many similar villages, and care and forbearance
will have to be exercised by everyone until the remedies are found, or
possible to be put into operation.

Dear Sir,

I have no objection to the Bridge By-Pass Campaign mentioned to Sgt. Reid
of Bridge that it would like to have a march through the village on July
26th. 1964, and in consequence a most helpful Inspector from Aylesham
called to see me last Saturday. He explained that he understood that
the Campaign wished to march through the village, and then proceed to
Canterbury, Hawk Lane, to hand in a document. The height of the summer
season is a very considerable accident risk.

I was able to give rather more detail, saying that
the intention was to march through the village from the lay-by at the
northern end to the Church, and then return. The body of the procession
was then to break up, and a small group of 8 continue down to Canterbury.
Apart from the usual set of banners we intended having no vehicles taking
part, but were including a bed (and dummy occupant) representing the
Ministry of Transport asleep to the dangers at Bridge.

Your Inspector then left to obtain a firm decision
concerning this modification, and was kind enough to return later to say
that it was regretted that the small group continuation to Canterbury
could not be allowed. All this is quite clear, and I would like to say at
once how very helpful the Police have been in all matters concerning the
Campaign. All that I wish to ask now is: can the small group
a. embuss on a vehicle in the lay-by and proceed by road to Hawk Lane ? or
b. not travel under any circumstances to hand in the letter to Sir Leslie
Thomas' office ?

It is merely that I want to be quite clear as to
what is disallowed. Naturally, we shall instantly obey whatever you
suggest, as this has always been a group seeking to remedy what it sees
as a bad situation by democratic means, and this does not allow any form
of civil disobedience.

Yours faithfully,

Deputy
John Purchese.

John Purchese, Esq.,
High Street,
Bridge.



Don't forget tomorrow's march - Sunday 3.0pm

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, ROSEBANK HIGH ST, BRIDGE.

BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

To the Editor,— Your correspondent, Mr. J. Purchese, rightly deplores the attitude of "authority" to the highly dangerous course of the A2 through Bridge.

Your anonymous correspondent, A. N. Other, also complains of the same highway, but suggests that action should be taken irrespective of political conviction.

In a democratic society such as our own, "authority" is, of course, ourselves, and we are all responsible, through our elected representatives, for "authority."

Unfortunately, we generally only have the opportunity of electing our representatives or "authority" from one of the three major political parties. Thus, I am afraid that the reasons for the present traffic problems in Bridge and the answers to them are political ones.

Bridge's elected authority in the question of trunk roads is the Member of Parliament, and the citizens of Bridge must surely ask themselves if their member has pursued the matter with a sufficient sense of responsibility and urgency. If they consider that their M.P. has not done his duty in safeguarding their vital interests, then they must either bring pressure to bear upon their M.P. to force him to so do, or, they must seek to have that member replaced.

The fact is that the motor industry has been encouraged to expand violently over the past 10 years without any Governmental consideration being given to the accommodation of its products. Faster and bigger cars and lorries have been produced in ever-increasing quantities with little comparative increase in roads and road safety measures.

That Bridge is only one symptom of a tragic national illness does not detract from the fact that Bridge's problem must be dealt with immediately.

Nationally we must implement the Crowther and Buchanan proposals and segregate pedestrians and traffic as a matter of great urgency. The alternative is rapidly increasing slaughter on the roads and complete chaos in our cities.

TED MOSS
(Prospective Liberal Parliamentary Candidate, Canterbury Division).
Apple Tree Cottage, Petham.

K4.177.64

BODY BLOW FOR ROAD SAFETY PLANNERS

Minister and extension of M2

THE Minister of Transport, Mr. Ernest Marples, on Friday dealt a body blow to those who were hoping for the lessening of danger to life and limb on the A2 between Brenley Corner and Dover.

Asked about extending the M2 to Canterbury and then Dover, Mr. Marples, in a written Parliamentary reply, said "I have no such plans."

"Beyond Brenley Corner the A2 will be progressively improved as a trunk road as priorities and funds permit."

The M2 is linked to the A2 by a high-level round-about at Brenley.

CONGESTED

Thousands of cars pour off the motorway on to the narrow and congested A2, heading for the Channel ports of Dover and Folkestone.

The A2 Group, who are campaigning for safety measures along its whole stretch from the motorway junction to Dover, hit back on Mon-

day with a plan to leave leaflets and cards at EVERY house along the road from the M2 to Dover.

They announced another protest march through Bridge, near Canterbury, on Sunday at 3 p.m.

Mr. Brian Lewis and Mr. John Purchese, both of Bridge, told the KENT MESSENGER "We are appealing for support from all those living along the A2 who know how dangerous the road now is and who wish to do something about it."

"You know how, apart from official statistics, there are dozens of near-accidents every week—cars overtaking that scrape others, cars that hit the one in front, pedestrians narrowly avoiding death because of speeding lorries, and unwieldy car transporters and other huge vehicles brushing the narrow pavements in the villages," they said.

VILLAGES

Mr. Purchese, one of the organisers of the A2 Group (which embraces the villages of Boughton, Harbledown, Bridge, Lydden, Temple Ewell, and Kearnsey) has first-hand knowledge of what can happen on the "road of death".

Last year he sent the Ministry of Transport two photographs. One showed the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Michael Ramsey) crossing the High Street, Bridge, for the induction of a new vicar.

The vicar led the way, and two policemen attended to see the Primate safely across.

The second photograph was of a wall knocked down in the High Street by a lorry. The driver chose to hit the wall "rather than the village constable's wife and child who were walking along the pavement a foot or two away."

Bridge By-Pass Campaign : The A2 Group



DEAR READER,

The Bridge By-Pass Campaign was formed two years ago to bring to the notice of the Ministry of Transport the dangerous situation at Bridge on the A2, where the traffic had been building up for years and where the opening of M2 could mean traffic chaos. For the past year the Campaign has been publicly pressing the Ministry to take action in the matter, taking its own traffic census to show the increase in traffic, and suggesting ways of preventing accidents.

At a public meeting held in April this year, a County Councillor advised the Campaign to spread its activities to the whole of A2, from Brenley Corner to Dover—and this is what we are now doing.

The Bridge By-Pass Campaign is now called "The A2 Group", and we are appealing for support from all those living along the A2, who know how dangerous the road now is and who wish to do something about it. You know, how apart from official statistics, there are dozens of near-accidents every week; cars overtaking that scrape others, cars that hit the one in front, pedestrians narrowly avoiding death because of speeding lorries, and unwieldy car transporters and other huge vehicles brushing the narrow pavements in the villages.

Yours faithfully,

BRIAN A. LEWIS, JOHN PURCHASE

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, ROSEBANK HIGH ST. BRIDGE.

Issued on the march : 26.7.64

26.7.1964

Sir L.M. Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.,
House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

Dear Sir,

A number of your constituents have this day signed an aide-memoire to the Minister of Transport, the Right Hon. Ernest Marples, MP., reminding him of the decrease in road safety through the village of Bridge.

The A2 Group would be most grateful if you would act on behalf of the village in your Division, by forwarding this document through the appropriate channels to the Minister. Possibly at the same time, you would wish to point out to the Minister that the A2 Group now views the whole of A2 from Brenley Corner to Dover as most dangerous, and in view of the Minister's recent statement that he proposes to do nothing towards relieving the situation also add that the Group sees no justification in his optimistic inaction. They feel he is asleep to the needs of the situation.

Yours faithfully,

Purchese
John Purchese.

A2 GROUP
SA 277

DAILY EXPRESS 28.7.1964

IGHTING MAD the village that on't take No for an answer

what you like
ut English villages,
re not hasty. Not
e. Places that
changed much in
turies don't fly off
die for nothing.

makes the Strange
Bridge all the
is a village of 700
n the London-Dover
A2. Going through
this artery of
is in places all of
le. And the traffic
ops day or night.
weekend, however, it
stop, jammed end to
nile the villagers
with banners de-
a by-pass.

went to Bridge and
How do you turn
villagers into
agitators? Two
men are behind the
affair: Brian Lewis,
eysor son of a local
and John Purchese,
nd technician, father
of children.

Grumble

IT has not been all easy.
The man in the 500-
year-old White Horse
inn spoke with the voice of
villagers everywhere when
he said: "People not been
here five minutes, trying to
change things..."

In fact, Mr. Lewis has
lived in Bridge all his life,
but since he is only 20 that
makes him a newcomer by
village standards. And Mr.
Purchese has been there
only four years, and before
then he lived all of three
miles away...

A by-pass would cost at
least £1 million, and
(though the Ministry is too
polite to point this out) a
million would probably buy
up Bridge entirely.

But Bridge is determined to
keep up a steady drip, drip,
drip which they hope will
wear the stony Ministry
down.

WILLIAM
CATER

DAILY EXPRESS 27.7.64

PROTEST

It was an odd day too for
some of the holiday-makers.
ANGRY villagers at Bridge,
Kent, held up two miles of
cars on the A2 Dover road.
They marched through the
narrow main street carrying
banners demanding a
by-pass.

A bowler-hatted figure in
a bed they trundled along
represented a "sleeping"
Mr. Marples.

DAILY EXPRESS

From: Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

29th July 1964

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter of 26th July on behalf of the A2 Group. I have forwarded this to the Minister of Transport.

I have studied the signatures with interest and should be grateful if you could let me know how many of those who have appended signatures are school children.

Yours sincerely
Leslie Thomas

John Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge.

Kentish Gazette,

Bridge Villagers On The March Again

A2 Group Planned

The villagers of Bridge were on the march again on Sunday. On one of the hottest and busiest days of the summer they succeeded in holding up traffic speeding "towards a Continental holiday."

Detached bygalle 31-7-64

asking Sir Leslie Thomas to deliver on our behalf."

The demonstration was a curtain raiser to the next step forward in the village's fight to remove traffic hazards on the A2.

Steady Pressure

At a public meeting in the village a few months ago, Cllr. A. J. Ross suggested they would do better to get the whole of the A2 from Brenchley Corner to Dover interested in improving.

And this is what Bridge is now doing. It is forming the "A2 Group," designed to keep up a steady pressure on the Ministry of Transport for the extension of the M2.

Next weekend over 2,000 leaflets and forms go out to everybody who faces on to the A2 between Brenchley Corner and Dover. It asks them if they are interested in pressing for improvements and if they are ready to take part in demonstrations and lobbying.

Says the letter from Mr. Purchese: "In the long run the life you save by your actions may be your own."

Bridge Traffic Problem

Minister Seeks Improvement

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Ernest Marples) is considering what he can do to improve the main Canterbury-Dover road through Bridge before he tackles the whole problem of the A2, Bridge-Blean Rural District Council were told on Wednesday.

The Road and Home Safety Committee reported that Canterbury's M.P., Sir Leslie Thomas, had asked a question in Parliament as to when the A2 was likely to be improved and when Bridge was likely to be by-passed.

The Minister had replied that he could not say when the schemes on the length of the A2 concerned could be found a place in the road programme but, in the meantime, he was considering what other measures could be taken to improve conditions through the village of Bridge.

The Council agreed to thank Sir Leslie—and to ask him to enquire of the Minister what other measures he had in mind.

The Clerk (Mr. I. F. Soilleux) said that a suggestion that a pedestrian crossing near Western Avenue, Bridge, should be reinstated was being considered by the County Council and Bridge Parish Council had decided to install trunk road Class "A" lighting through the main street.

The Council also agreed to a proposal by Cllr. H. T. Price that Kent County Council be asked to consider providing double white lines between the Red Lion and the junction with the road to Bourne Park.

Detached bygalle 31-7-64



Carrying a bed containing a figure suggesting a sleeping Minister of Transport, residents of Bridge held on "aide-memoire" demonstration on Sunday.



PIPE-SMOKING JOHN PURCHASE, one of the organisers of the A2 Group, leads the protest march along the race-track A2 at Bridge,

Kent Messenger 31.7.64

Bridge Protest Marchers



Angry residents on the march. This was the scene at Bridge on Sunday as villagers staged a protest march in support of their claim for a by-pass.

Dover Express
31.7.64

BED HOLDS UP TRAFFIC



COMPLETE WITH UMBRELLA AND BOWLER, a dummy representing Mr. Marples is pulled in its bed through Bridge High Street, near Canterbury, on Sunday.

Kent Messenger 31.7.64

VILLAGE FIGHTS FOR A BY-PASS

HUNDREDS of cars were held up on the London-Dover A2 road near Canterbury on Sunday afternoon by a BED.

It was pulled on a trolley along Bridge High Street by members of the A2 Group, who are campaigning for safety measures along 20 miles of the trunk road between Bleaney Corner and Dover.

In the bed was a recumbent dummy representing the Minister of Transport, Mr. Ernest Marples. A notice board read 'The M.O.T. is asleep to our needs.'

One of the demands of the A2 Group has been the extension of the M2 to bypass Canterbury and Bridge. Last week, Mr. Marples rejected the idea in a written parliamentary reply.

Mr. John Purchese, one of the organisers of the A2 Group, told a KENT MESSENGER reporter after Sunday's protest march with the bed. "It was most successful. There were 50 cars at a time held up at each end of Bridge."

Letter to M.P.

"Now I am going to the Conservative headquarters in Canterbury to deliver a letter addressed to the M.P., Sir Leslie Thomas."

Both before and after the march on Sunday cars and lorries poured through Bridge—and through all the other villages on the A2—in an endless stream.

Records taken by the A2 Group in recent months have shown that more than 6,000 vehicles pass through narrow Bridge High Street in a 24-hour period at weekends.

Most of them have come, from or are heading for, the Medway Motorway.

THE A2 GROUP

M.O.T. REF: HGP-14-42 068

DATE: 31.7.1964

Organiser: John Purchese,
'Rosebank', High Street,
Bridge. Tel. Bridge 485.

Campaign Sec.: Brian A. Lewis,
1, Weston Villas, High Street,
Bridge. Tel. Bridge 254.

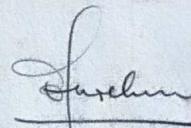
Sir L.M. Thomas, MBE, TD, MP,
9, Hawks Lane,
Canterbury, Kent.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of the 29th. July acknowledging receipt of the aide-memoire to the Minister.

It is gratifying to note that you studied the document with interest. The answer to the question in the second paragraph of your letter is: two. The other rather shaky signatures are those of elderly people, of which there is a number who are frightened by the traffic through Bridge.

Yours faithfully,



The Dover Express & East Kent News, Friday, 31st July, 1964

NO PLANS TO EXTEND THE NEW MOTORWAY

Protest Marchers Out Again At Bridge

COMPLETING THE M.2 MOTORWAY, which extends almost as far as Canterbury and then comes to an abrupt halt in a roundabout at Brenley Corner, is likely to be a long, drawn out process. Mr. Ernest Marples, the Minister of Transport, has dashed the hopes of the A.2 Group — set up recently to campaign for improved safety measures along the narrow, congested trunk road. It had hoped that there was a scheme in the offing to bring the motorway through to the port at Dover, but Mr. Marples says "I have no such plans." Hundreds of thousands of motorists travel at high speed along the motorway and, unsuspectingly, are channelled off into the narrow A.2 to Canterbury and Dover.

But the Minister says the A.2 beyond Brenley Corner will be "progressively improved as a trunk road as priorities and funds permit."

The A.2 Group is not letting things rest there, however. On Sunday there was a protest march at Bridge and leaflets and cards appealing for support have been delivered to every resident along the road.

Traffic Stopped

The marchers, who held up traffic for over a mile, propelled a bowler-hatted figure in a bed representing a sleeping Mr. Marples.

A leading organiser, Mr. John Purchese, of High Street, Bridge, said this week that members invited everyone living along the road, from its junction with the M2 to Dover, to add weight to the Group's efforts to get some action.

Every day, he said, there were a multitude of accidents, or near accidents and pedestrians narrowly escape death or serious injury.

The narrow streets of small communities such as Bridge, Lydden and Temple Ewell—where, in some places there are no pavements—were totally inadequate for heavy traffic, he said.

In fact, he added, the A2 was never meant to cope with speeding lorries, huge transporters and other heavy vehicles. Official accident statistics didn't reveal half the story, he said, and it was time something was done.



235:3
26.7.64.
11.30 am.

22 MILES OF LEAFLETS TO ANSWER MARPLES

DB



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telex: 21352 Telegrams: Transminy, London
Telephone: WATERloo 7999, ext.

Our reference: HGP 14/42/068

Your reference:

22 July, 1964

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of the 13th July, offering to reserve space in your pamphlet for a Ministry statement on the subject of the A.2 trunk road.

However, I do not think this would serve any useful purpose at the present time, since we have nothing to add to our previous statements on this matter.

As you are already aware the A.2 will be progressively improved beyond Brenley Corner as priorities and funds permit. And, as we have informed you in previous correspondence, a by-pass of Bridge will form part of this general improvement.

Yours faithfully,

R. A. Pearson

John Purchase, Esq.,
The A.2 Group,
"Rosebank",
High Street,
Bridge,
Nr. Canterbury,
Kent.

This paper is suitable for Dyeline Photocopying

Action Group Told: No Motorway Extension

LEAFLETS demanding action towards lessening danger on the A2 road from Brenley Corner to Dover are to be distributed to every house along the 22-mile stretch from the end of the M2 motorway to Dover.

This is the reply of the A2 Group to Transport Minister Marples statement to the Commons that he has no plans to extend the motorway.

He said that beyond Brenley Corner the A2 will be progressively improved as trunk road as priorities and funds permit.

The M2 is linked to the A2 by a high-level roundabout at Brenley between Faversham and Canterbury.

Thousands of cars pour off the motorway on to the narrow, congested A2, heading for the channel ports of Dover and Folkestone.

SAFETY

Near Deaths

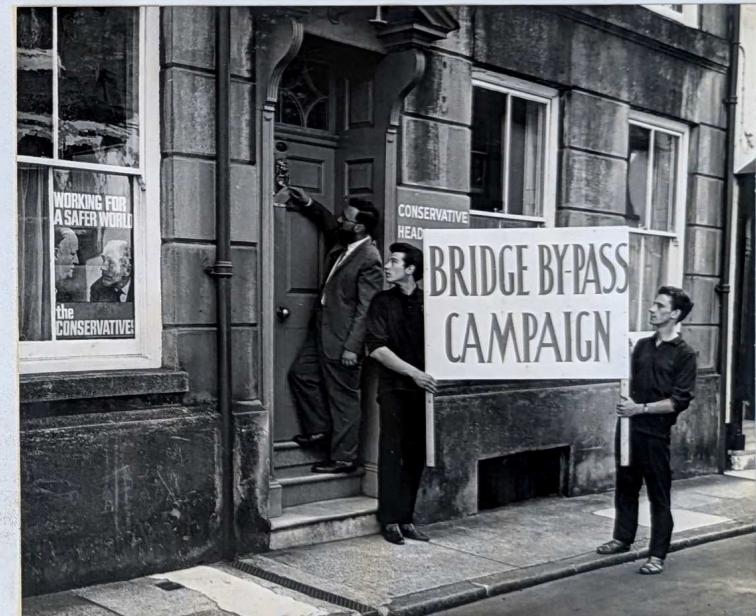
The A2 Group are campaigning for safety measures along the whole stretch of the road from the motorway junction at Brenley to Dover.

Mr. Brian Lewis and Mr. John Purchase, both of Bridge, near Canterbury, said: "We are appealing for support from all those living along the A2 who know how dangerous the road now is and who wish to do something about it.

"In addition to recorded crashes there are dozens of near-accidents every week—cars scraping others, pedestrians narrowly avoiding death and unwieldy car transporters and other huge vehicles brushing the narrow pavements in the villages."

The A2 Group's interests include the villages of Boughton, Harbledon Bridge, Lydden, Temple Ewell and Kearsney.

Evening News, 31.7.1964



Delivering the aide memoire. Kent Messenger pic. PRE/149/1

Bridge
1190.50 Col. inches.

From Leslie M. Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

16th November 1962

Dear Mr. Furchese,

As you know, before he left for the United States Mr. Thomas saw the Minister of Transport and expressed to him the concern felt by you and other residents of Bridge regarding traffic conditions through the village and the need for a by-pass. In addition he wrote to Mr. Marples and sent him your correspondence.

I have now received a reply from the Minister and in Mr. Thomas's absence I am sending this to you now rather than delaying it until his return next month. I have of course kept a copy.

If you would like to make any comments on the Minister's letter, I will ensure that Mr. Thomas sees them as soon as he gets back.

Yours sincerely,

Personal Secretary

J. Furchese, Esq.,
"Rosebank",
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury.



From the Minister
ST. CHRISTOPHER HOUSE
SOUTHWARK STREET
LONDON S.E.1

15 November, 1962.

Dear Leslie,

You will recall your letter of 10th October enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Mr. J. Furchese of "Rosebank", High Street, Bridge, and the petition concerning the proposed by-pass of Bridge.

I am fully aware that improvements in road conditions at Bridge are very desirable, and I have much sympathy with those who think that something further should be done soon to improve matters there, especially in summer. If Bridge were one of only a few cases in the country to be considered I could, of course, help more quickly than I can in fact promise to do. I know you will appreciate that there are so many really pressing schemes demanding attention that I am forced to work to a system of priorities. Only in that way can I be sure that the money made available to me by Parliament for road works is put to the very best effect in the country's interest as a whole. Bridge could only be taken out of its proper place in the queue at the expense of another and even more necessary scheme elsewhere. The priority given to a particular scheme must, in the end be a matter of judgment, and that responsibility rests with me. I must say then, but ~~without the building of a~~

From: Sir Leslie Thomas, MBE, TD, MP.



House of Commons,
London, S.W.1

30th December 1963

Dear Mr Purchese

Thank you for your letter.

I have again communicated with the Minister of Transport and will keep you in touch with any possible changes in policy.

Yours sincerely
Leslie Thomas

John Purchese, Esq.,
Rosebank,
High Street,
Bridge,
Canterbury.

BRIDGE



MEANS DANGER !

* 1964 is General Election Year. For the Electorate's benefit this leaflet details each Party's official proposals for Bridge High Street road safety. Conservative, Liberal and Labour statements appear overleaf.

am interested in the
campaign. Please keep
me fully informed.

would be willing to
take an active interest.
(protest marches, etc.)

ick as required, complete
d address, and post back

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHASE, ROSEBANK HIGH ST. BRIDGE

Village steps up fight for safer High Street

WHAT price do you put on life? That is the question on an envelope being circulated by a group of people at Bridge, near Canterbury. The group is campaigning for a by-pass at Bridge, or at least speed restrictions or other measures to make the High-st. safer.

KENTISH EXPRESS 21.1.64

ing considered at the moment, but they cannot go ahead until the Government reaches a decision about the Channel Tunnel.

Mr. George Cobbett, prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate for Canterbury, says the situation is bound to become more dangerous because of the increasing traffic. He says that until a by-pass is eventually built more must be done to make the village safer.

Mr. J. H. Stewart, chairman of the local Liberals, says they would press for the highest priority to be given to the project.

The narrow, winding main street, part of the A2 trunk road, is used by Dover-bound traffic. It has become heavier recently because drivers have been using the M2 route rather than the A20 through Folkestone.

In its circular headed Bridge Means Danger! the group sets out the three local political parties' views.

The leaflets were published by 37-year-old Mr. John Purchese, who lives at Rosebank, in Bridge High-st. He has been campaigning for by-pass for some time, and has an ever-growing band of helpers.

They have seen too often the injuries and deaths resulting from vehicles speeding through the village. Cars sweep down one hill into Bridge and accelerate to climb the hill on the other side.

The campaign secretary is 20-year-old Brian Lewis, who last year organised a protest march through the village.

Conservative view is given by Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P. for Canterbury. He says two schemes are be-

M2

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

REF: HGP-14/42-068

E. 3.2.1964

Organiser: JOHN PURCHASE,
'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

Campaign Sec.: BRIAN A. LEWIS,
1, Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 254

The Minister of Transport,
St. Christopher House,
Southwark Street,
London, S.E.1

Dear Mr. Marples,

I apologise for writing directly to you, but I feel that the body of this letter will explain my action. I should add at once that I do not propose to write directly to you again, and that I sincerely hope that you will have a sight of this letter.

You, Sir, are aware of the road situation in Bridge. Sir Leslie Thomas, Member of Parliament for the Canterbury Division, has been in correspondence with you on the subject several times. You may not be aware of the following. I enclose pamphlets which I believe indicate the extent to which a very large body of people is dissatisfied with the road conditions in Bridge High Street. Although three different political bodies are represented in the leaflet, they unanimously condemn the danger in the village. This collective opinion should disenchant your Ministry with the thought that this campaign lacks weight of public opinion.

Over a period now of two years I have written to your Ministry on the subject, and have collected the views of five of your officials - who answer my letters in random order. In 1963 I wrote four letters - scarcely an arduous number to which to reply - but have not yet had the pleasure of an answer to my letter dated 28.12.1963. (I enclose a copy in case the original is mislaid). I wonder, Sir, if you could indicate to your officials that a calendar month should be a sufficient period of gestation for a reply, and that the answer should relate to my letter.

If I may, I will end my letter with the paragraph with which I end all correspondence to your Ministry. It is more to the point now than when it was first coined two years ago.

I shall quite understand if comment is delayed until due consideration has been given to the points raised, but I would like to point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese
John Purchese.

Enc.: Leaflets & Copy of
letter dated 28.12.'63.



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1

Telegrams: Transminy London Telex

Telephone: WATERLOO 7999, ext. 2400.

Our reference: HGP 14/42/068

Your reference:

11 February, 1964.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 3rd February about the traffic conditions on trunk road A.2 at Bridge.

Now that a firm decision has been made on the form that the cross-Channel link will take, - We can now re-examine the planning of the road pattern required in east Kent. Any plans which are made must include provisions for by-passes, in one form or another, of villages and towns on A.2 where the highway is unsuitable for the needs of present and future traffic. We have always appreciated that traffic must be taken away from the centre of Bridge, but until the decision on the Channel Tunnel was made we were unable even to consider whether this should be achieved by means of a small by-pass or by building a completely new road. It now appears probable that the solution will be a by-pass, but I must point out that considerable work will have to be done in investigating future traffic volumes and engineering problems before this can be confirmed.

I am unable to say when this improvement will take place, as you will appreciate that all schemes must be compared one with another in arriving at a logical and fair order of priority for allocation of the funds available.

I am sorry that no reply was sent to your letter of 28th December, but in view of the fact that you said you would "quite understand if comment is delayed until due consideration has been given to the points raised" we deferred replying in the hope that you could be given more definite information than was then available.

Yours faithfully,

11/2/64 teleph 13 minutes for Dept of Transport

R. L. Pearce

Kenf.
Canterbury
Bridge
High Street
"Rosebank"
T. Purchese, Esq.
11/2/64

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

Organiser: JOHN PURCHASE,
'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 485

Campaign Sec.: BRIAN A. LEWIS,
1, Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. Bridge 254

O.T. REF: HGP-14-42-008

ATE. 15.2.1964

The Secretary,
The Ministry of Transport,
Southwark Street, London, S.E.1

- for circulation to:- G. Davis, Esq., L. Durrant, Esq., F. Samuel, Esq.,
R. Pearson, Esq., R.L. Pearce, Esq., and G.D. Hewett, Esq. of the Divisional
Road Engineer's Dept., ref: RDL/34/6T71.

Gentlemen,

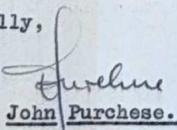
I have to thank Mr. R. L. Pearce of the Ministry Group for his acknowledgment of my letters dated 28.12.1963 and 3.2.1964. It was gratifying to learn that since a firm decision had been made on the form that the cross-Channel link would take you could now re-examine the planning of the road pattern required in east Kent. Foolishly, I had imagined that this process might have been already contemplated.

This correspondence is of the greatest interest locally, so I am sure you will not be averse to my condensing Mr. R.L. Pearce's letter down to the following statement:-

"The Ministry envisages no definite plans for Bridge, but it can be forecast confidently - as far as known to Mr. Pearce - that it would seem probable that the long term solution might be a by-pass. Although promises will be made periodically that the matter is under review, no attempt can be made in the immediate future to minimise the dangers of the High Street, since the accident pattern caused by future traffic volumes and engineering problems have to be conscientiously investigated before any decision can be confirmed - subject, of course, to a logical and fair order of priority for the allocation of available funds." Unless you might wish to alter the odd word or two I shall assume that this is the Minister's answer to my personal letter to him, and will publish on March 1st.

It was satisfying to learn that the delay in replying to my letter dated 28.12.1963 was caused by due consideration being given the points raised. I shall wait hopefully for the Group's comments on the points raised in this letter, but I would like to point out that events have a way of outstripping Ministerial preparedness, as you may learn publicly this summer.

Yours faithfully,



John Purchase.

Bridge Traffic Problem

"M.P. Doing Nothing"

What is Sir Leslie Thomas - Canterbury's Conservative M.P. - doing about the Bridge traffic problem? The answer is patently clear, says Mr. Ted Moss, the Canterbury constituency Liberal candidate - right.

Speaking to Herne Bay Liberals on Saturday, he answered criticisms of his "angry young man" speech which had been made at the East Kent and Canterbury Conservative Club dinner by Sir Leslie Thomas and Mr. John Baker White.

"How dare I interfere in this previously impregnable Tory stronghold? How dare I be angry at the conditions in which our old people are forced to live? How dare I be indignant about the appalling housing conditions that exist, and that to obtain a house for a married young couple is just impossible?"

"How dare I endeavour to serve my country and challenge the complacency of the Conservative Party, which has for far too long represented the people of this constituency?"

"That I should hardly dare to interfere in this Conservative running of things I learn from the speakers at the annual dinner of the East Kent and Canterbury Conservative Club," he said.

Yet surely the people of Bridge, for instance, need someone to interfere in the running of their affairs. So far, nothing, absolutely nothing, has been or is being done to relieve the appalling traffic problem.

KENTISH GAZETTE 21.2.64

Patently Clear

"The Ministry of Transport takes months to answer a single letter on the subject. What is our Member of Parliament doing about the problem of Bridge? The answer is patently clear - nothing."

I never read of Canterbury's elected representative raising his voice in the House of Commons. Does our Member ever speak in the Commons? If not, why not? I certainly should make Canterbury's presence felt if the people of Canterbury so desired my election.

"Our Member tells us that since becoming an M.P. he has been able to travel the world gaining experience. Experience at what, and for what? Dare I mention that his duty might have been better served staying here and attending the needs of his constituents?"

"I had no wish to engage in personalities when I first came here, but it appears that I have no option in the matter. To categorically state, as our Member does, that Britain is at the top of the league table of nations, surely questions his suitability to represent some 60,000 adult people. If Britain is top, with U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. way behind, why did 912 scientists and engineers leave this country for the U.S.A. alone last year? And why is this mass exodus now reaching alarming proportions?"

"Fiction and wishful thinking will not do any more. Valid criticism cannot any longer be fobbed off as 'un-British' or 'denigrating.'"

BRIDGE TRAFFIC PROBLEM

To the Editor,-

Under the above heading, Mr. Ted Moss, the Liberal candidate, wrote in last week's "Kentish Gazette," the sub-heading being "M.P. Doing Nothing." I should like to suggest to Mr. Moss that before writing similar articles he should ascertain that the facts are correct.

The truth is that Sir Leslie Thomas, M.P., has been most helpful in assisting the inhabitants of Bridge in their endeavours to alleviate the traffic problems in this village. Having lived in Bridge for 12 years, I am more aware of the problem than Mr. Moss.

I also know that as much as a year ago as the result of a petition started by Mr. J. Purchase and wholeheartedly supported by Bridge people, Sir Leslie Thomas went to a great deal of trouble to bring it to the notice of Mr. Marples. In consequence, we had a most sympathetic letter from the latter in which he made it clear that he could do nothing definite until the decision concerning the Channel tunnel was settled. He would then again give a serious consideration to the matter.

As recently as a few weeks ago Sir Leslie contributed an article to a pamphlet, printed by Mr. Purchase, in which he confirmed his support to any scheme which would help solve the traffic problem of Bridge, saying that he would continue to press for the extension of the M.2 to Dover, to be started as soon as possible.

I hope the above has corrected the absolutely untrue impression given by Mr. Moss that our M.P. is doing nothing - the reverse is the truth - he is splendid in the way he works unstintingly for his constituents.

GRACE DOVE.
(Member Bridge Conservative Committee and Women's Advisory Committee)

KENTISH GAZETTE 23.2.64

BRIDGE TRAFFIC PROBLEM

To the Editor.

Your correspondent, Grace Dove, accuses me of being unaware of the facts relating to the Bridge traffic disgrace. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The facts are that, since the commencement of the Bridge By-pass Campaign in January, 1962, some 24 letters, involving over 4,000 words, have been received by the organisers of that campaign as follows:

Ministry of Transport - 11 letters (with four different signatures, indicating that no one individual is responsible for Bridge).

Ministry of Transport - Divisional Road Engineer - five letters.

Member of Parliament - Canterbury - three letters.

Member of Parliament's secretary - three letters.

Letter from Minister of Transport to Member of Parliament - one letter.

Letter from Ministry of Transport answering Member of Parliament's question for Bridge - road accident statistics - one letter.

All that the above correspondence has resulted in is:

(i) The ascertainment that for the five years between July 1, 1958, and June 30, 1963, 20 accidents involving five fatal and 28 other injuries were reported for Bridge.

(ii) The laying of some 200 kerbstones in several sections through the village.

In the words of the Chief Constable of Kent "... the only satisfactory solution can be the provision of a by-pass."

As the traffic still roars increasingly through Bridge, endangering its citizens, it is a matter of fact that, 4,000 words and 200 kerbstones apart, nothing has been done, nothing is being done and nothing is being planned to be done.

TED MOSS,
Proprietary Parliamentary Candidate Liberal Association,
Canterbury,
Apple Tree Cottage,
Petham, Canterbury.

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