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.



285:3
26.7.64.
11.30 am.

22 MILES OF LEA

DB

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telex: 21352 *Telegrams: Transminry, 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

R. A. Pearson

John Purchese, Esq.,
The A.2 Group,
"Rosebank",
High Street,
Bridge,
Nr. Canterbury,
Kent.

This paper is suitable for Dyeline Photocopying

FLETS TO ANSWER MARPLES

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 a trunk road as priorities and funds permit."

The M2 is linked to the A2 by a high-level roundabout at Brepley, 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. Purchese,

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,

Elizabeth Knapton

Personal Secretary

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

From the Minister
ST. CHRISTOPHER HOUSE
SOUTHWARK STREET
LONDON S.E.1

Dear Leslie,

15 November, 1962.

You will recall your letter of 10th October enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Mr. J. Purchese 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

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.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN PURCHESE. ROSEBANK HIGH ST. BRIDGE

am interested in the

mpaign. Please keep

e fully informed.

would be willing to

ke an active interest.

rotest marches, etc.)

ick as required, complete

d address, and post back

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 31.1.'64

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 a 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 swoop 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 being 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.

REF: HGP-14-42-068

E. 3.2.1964

M2

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

Organiser: JOHN PURCHESE,
'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 disatisfied 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 correspodence 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 the points raised, but I would like to point out that events have a way of outstripping preparedness.

Yours faithfully,

John Purchese.

Enc.: Leaflets & Copy of
letter dated 28.12.'63.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, LONDON S.E.1
Telegrams: Transminry 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,

R. L. Pearce

M2

THE BRIDGE BY-PASS CAMPAIGN

Organiser: JOHN PURCHESE,
'Rosebank', High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. *Bridge 485*

Campaign Sec.: BRIAN A. LEWIS,
1, Weston Villas, High Street, Bridge,
Canterbury, Kent. *Bridge 254*

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

DATE. 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 Purchese.

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—"nothing."

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 new house for many young couples 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 their 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 wistful 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 subheading 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. Purchese 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 serious consideration to the matter.

As recently as a few weeks ago Sir Leslie contributed an article to a pamphlet, printed by Mr. Purchese, 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 28.2.64

KENTISH GAZETTE 6.4.1964.

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,
Proposective Parliamentary Candidate Liberal Association,
Canterbury.
Apple Tree Cottage,
Petham, Canterbury.