

## Notes from Local Interest Group 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Present in Hall:** Allan Lloyd, Honor Cartwright, John Price, Allison Joyce, Mo Lloyd (ML), Jenny Francis, Joan Lloyd, Bronwen Jenkins, Elsa Harflett, Roy & Avryl Lloyd, Cherry & Victor Williams, Rob & Helen Duggan, Jim & Chris Lowe, Julia Price, Celia Jones, Joan Hughes, Leonie Waithman, Rob Davies, Grace Davies, Stuart Hulse, Helen Barnett.

**Present on Zoom:** Wendy Ozols, Dave Latham, Llewelyn Breese, Peter and Margaret Joyce, Marilyn, Margaret Price, Helen Griffiths, Heather Pink, Chris Smedley, Sylvia Illingsworth

**Apologies:** Den Ozols, Joan Clinkskel, Iris Lloyd, Sue Lawler, Sylvia Bigglestone

ML welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced our speaker, Allan Lloyd.

### The Story of the Kington Bypass

Allan began by acknowledging David Latham and thanking him for allowing his photos to be included in the presentation. He also thanked Allison Joyce, whose idea it had been to invite Allan to talk about the bypass.

Allan told us that the bypass had been opened on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1982, but that the process of achieving this aim had begun in 1971, so the campaign had lasted for 11 years. It had been a difficult process. The campaign had been led by the Bypass Committee which had been formed by Allan and David Joyce.

Allan's first photo showed the bypass under construction, the roundabout near the Hatton Garden Industrial Estate being quite obvious. He then went on to talk about why the bypass was so badly needed.



**Aerial View of the Bypass under construction**

A photo of pre-1900s Kington illustrated how quiet the town centre roads had once been. There was a young girl standing in the middle of the road and two carts were visible, but there was no

traffic. There was evidence of the road being used for horse-drawn vehicles. Because there was little traffic, the fact that the main High Street was quite a narrow road was not a problem. Allan went on to tell us that the first car in Kington was registered in 1904 and had the registration plate, CJ 30; it was owned by James Friar.

The next photo showed a completely different scene and was taken in 1970. The High Street in Kington was the main road between Oxford and Aberystwyth (the A44) and so was used by local traffic as well as those using the A44 to get across the country. In addition, lorries from the nearby quarries at Burlingjobb had to come through the town. As we had seen in the previous photo we had been shown, the High Street is not very wide and at the time the photo below was taken there was no alternative to getting through Kington and so congestion was a major issue. (The photo below clearly shows the desperate need for a bypass.) Allan and David Joyce did some surveys and recorded the level of traffic, as well as the time it took to travel through Kington at this time; it was 45 minutes! So, in 1971, the Kington Bypass Committee was formed and they began to lobby for a solution.



**Kington High Street 1970 (Photo David Latham)**

Herefordshire County Council had already recognised that there was a problem with congestion and had drawn up plans for an inner relief road. This scheme was supported by Kington Town Council. In their proposal, the bridge across the River Arrow would be realigned and the relief road would go across the meadows where the Co-op is now located. In the centre of town, some listed buildings would be destroyed, along with many of the shops, and also the west side of Church Street. It would, therefore, have a very significant impact on the town centre. The Kington Bypass Committee wanted to get an alternative route considered and adopted.

It was usual practice for the Town Council to ask six members to stand down periodically (they would then be re-elected). However, in 1971, the Kington Bypass Committee put up six candidates

for election in their place and they were duly elected. Although they were still in a minority on the Town Council (there were 12 other members), there was little opposition to Allan's being elected Chairman of the Committee. This was important because, as Chairman, Allan compiled the agenda, controlled the meeting and had the casting vote. At the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> July 1971, the Kington Bypass was the last item on the agenda. By the time it came to discuss the issues, many of the councillors had already left the meeting and there were only six members remaining; the bypass was put to the vote and was passed. By September that year, as a result of a ruling made by the Secretary of State for the Environment, the inner relief road plan was removed and only the bypass proposal remained "on the table".

It now meant that the Committee needed to find an alternative route for the bypass. On the eastern side of town, where the land was flatter, there had been a tram road running from Sunset to Stanner Road. This had been built from Hay-on-Wye in 1820 and extended to Burlingjobb by 1833. It followed the Back Brook, on the Kington side of the stream. Then, in 1857, the railway arrived in the town and this followed a similar line to the tram road and extended from Kington, past Burlingjobb and on to New Radnor. By 1964, the railway had closed. However, the route that both of these systems had followed was ideal and so it was this one that was put forward by the Bypass Committee.

At this time, Hereford County Council still favoured a route to the west of the town. The Committee had to do something to change their minds and so David Joyce contacted a Professor in Urban Design and Town Planning at Cardiff University and he brought some of his students to do a survey of traffic in the town. At the same time the Committee raised money in order to fund their campaign. They also secured a voice on Kington Town Council (Jim Lloyd) and the support of the MP for Leominster, Peter Temple Morris, so the Committee was making progress, if slowly. The turning point came when Hereford and Worcester County Councils merged. This resulted in a change of personnel at the Council and Allan contacted every member on the Worcester side of the Council to inform them about the Committee's proposal for the bypass and the projected construction of the new Craig Goch reservoir in the Elan Valley which could add to the traffic problems in the town.

The new Hereford and Worcester County Council produced a list of eleven new bypasses and Kington was on this list. A meeting was arranged at the Guild Hall in Worcester and representatives from each of the proposed bypasses were there to plead their case. Kington was the sole Herefordshire proposal represented at the meeting and many of those present were not even aware of where Kington was. Allan spoke to the meeting and within a month the Kington Bypass had made its way to the top of the list. It was the first of the eleven to be completed (in 1982) and it cost £1.9 million. It had been a long process, but well worthwhile. On 10<sup>th</sup> November 1982, the opening attracted a huge crowd of people and there was coverage of the event on the Midlands Today programme on TV. Allan concluded by saying that what they accomplished proves, "where there's a will, things can be achieved".



**The Opening of the Kington Bypass November 1982 (Photo David Latham)**

At the end of the meeting, ML thanked Allan for a fantastic talk. She added that local issues and changes are the most relevant to people and the building of the Kington Bypass is a great example of this. A great many people present at the talk will remember the difficulties encountered in trying to drive through Kington in the past and they will be extremely grateful to the Bypass Committee for their hard work and tenacity in achieving their aim. Allan's talks are always fascinating and brilliantly well researched and we are most grateful to him for giving so generously of his time to come to talk to us.

ML thanked the ladies who made the refreshments at the end and also John Price who, as always, was in charge of all of the technical wizardry.