

1968

Youngsters were turned away

TWO youths and a girl took a day off from work to take carefully typed statements telling why Tenterden young people want more jobs to the public inquiry at Ashford into the council's appeal for more land for factories.

... AND THIS IS WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE SAID

But nobody asked them to speak.

Disconsolate, they wandered out of the inquiry chamber still anxious to put the case they think is desperate, but baffled by the busy crowds of barristers, solicitors, K.C.C. officials, councillors and their sheaves of maps, reference books and statements.

They confessed they believed they were not wanted. The little party were David Mills (18), of 10, Green-side, High Halden, Michael Morris (21), of 6, Hookstead, High Halden, and Wendy Bugden (16), of Oastleigh, Further Quarter, High Halden.

David is chairman of the members' committee at Tenterden Youth Club. With the other two, he organised a petition to the K.C.C. asking them to help bring more jobs to the town and got 126 young people's signatures to it.

He says he telephoned solicitors connected with the inquiry and on the appointed day left for Ashford with Michael. When they arrived they gave their names to an official and explained what they wanted to do. They were told, they say, that it was unlikely their evidence would be wanted.

They leave

After hearing part of the morning's proceedings they decided they might as well go to work. So they left.

Wendy went to two wrong addresses before she found the inquiry and arrived just after the youths had gone. She, too, says she was told she would not be wanted. A little uncertain because the boys had gone, Wendy sat it out until the lunch break, then she, too, went back to work.

All three were put out when they learned on Wednesday that after they had gone counsel for the K.C.C. made a strong point that there was no evidence about youth unemployment from a Youth Employment Officer, and the Ministry of Housing Inspector holding the inquiry, himself asked if there was any evidence from young people or youth clubs.

This is what they would have said if they'd had the chance.



Wendy Bugden

I WAS determined to have a job by the time I left Home-wood School a year ago. For three months before I left I typed everywhere in Tenterden. Neither offices nor shops wanted me. The Employment Exchange had nothing for me.

"After three months I found my present job in an office near my home and I am very grateful for it."

In the statement she had typed for the inquiry, Wendy would have said:

"When my friends were looking for jobs in Tenterden not many were successful. It seemed there were too many people and not enough employment."

"As for the future, some problems will be worse

unless we get more industry. Although there have been only some 31 houses built since Jan 1 this year and 56 planned and some started, next out of the people who will live in these houses, 80 or more are going to want jobs — the majority in Tenterden.

"To work in Ashford means 'fares,' apart from transport problems, i.e., no public transport between 7.30 a.m. and 9 a.m., meaning that one would have to waste an hour in Ashford before normal office hours, or make arrangements to start at 9.30 a.m. — not many employers would like this.

"Industry is really a 'must' in Tenterden."

Wendy would also have pointed to the lack of training facilities and alleged a lack of interest in the welfare and training of young people by the Tenterden "rich," who, she says, "say retain the charm of Tenterden at all costs and let the young people go to London or anywhere, but Tenterden to earn their livings."

Michael Morris

MICHAEL MORRIS works now with the Kent County Council Roads Department at their High Halden depot.

Like the other two, Michael has serious concern, not for himself, but for the children who will be leaving school in the next few years.



David Hills

DAVID'S story would have been of his own difficulty in finding a job and of his friends' experiences.

He went to school at Lynton before his parents moved to High Halden and had a re-occurrence of childhood asthma working in cold storage chambers and outside.

The only job he has been able to find is at an Ashford factory. He travels 20 miles each day by moped and takes as much overtime as he can to make ends meet. On Monday of this week he left home at 5.30 a.m. and got back at 10 p.m.

His mother said on Wednesday: "He feels he must take the overtime to make it worthwhile."