

THE HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

newsletter

NUMBER 173

AUTUMN 2014

Ideas and Actions

AT A PUBLIC meeting on 20th August, we were told that the proposed junction 3a on the M40 was “at this stage, just an idea”. Many in the room who saw it as a threat to their livelihoods, or who claimed already to have observed a fall in house prices, were not easily calmed.

In contrast, the planned move of Wycombe museum to Queen Victoria road had reached a relatively advanced stage of detail planning when news came that WDC had withdrawn their application for funding for the move and proposed instead to invest in it at its current site, a U-turn which everyone seems to have taken in their stride, although it brings a significant change in outlook for WHAT (the Wycombe Heritage and Arts Trust).

It is hard to keep up with the incoming stream of ideas and actions at present. The Government’s Growth agenda has led to a WDC recommendation to release for development all the reserve sites in our Local Plan. Understandably unpopular, it is seen by WDC officers as the only way of keeping some control of development. Meanwhile a new application to build 22 houses which would obstruct the Bourne End railway has not escaped the vigilance of our Transport group.

Civic Voice wants Civic Societies to engage with the political agenda and has drawn up a draft “manifesto” to put to candidates during next year’s election campaign. It has also drawn our attention to the “Farrell Review”. Commissioned by the Department for Culture Media and Sport, this champions the Civic cause and includes a recommendation that every town or city should have an “Urban Room” to act as an exhibition, learning and community space, to be able to explore the place’s past and future. If only!

We have been trying to pin down a location with a good footfall for an exhibition next year. With a downsizing of local history support at Wycombe library, and uncertainty about the state of museum developments by then, it would be great if there were an “Urban Room” we could use. The Old library perhaps? Or the Brunel shed?

Speaking of which, we think all involved in creating the mural on the latter should be congratulated. It has transformed a much-talked-about eyesore into a positive feature. It just shows what can be done with a little applied imagination,

Jackie Kay



...caring about our town: past, present and future

Registered Charity No. 257897

Honorary Secretary: Tony Hatton, 41 Bassetsbury Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 1QZ. Tel: (01494) 445071

Planning This Quarter

THIS QUARTER'S work of the Planning Group was overshadowed by a sad and tragic event, the unexpected loss to a serious illness of Trevor Carter, who had been a key member of the Group since 2003. His contribution to the Group's work was huge: his detailed knowledge of the Local Plan, which is crucial in the determination of all planning applications, was invaluable. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of detailed matters such as the Council's policy on the provision of parking in new developments, and yet he had a remarkable ability to see the wood for the trees and to distil long documents into succinct summaries that we could all manage. He was extraordinarily well organised, always able to lay his hands quickly on the facts that were needed. In recent years he had been an invited member of the Council's panel keeping up-to-date with the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. His loss comes at a particularly crucial time for the Group, just as Wycombe District Council have concluded that they need to release all the reserve housing sites for development in the near future. Those of us who are left have been working hard to pick up the threads of the arguments that were so familiar to Trevor.

Group Membership Our new Group Chairman, Andrew Taylor, continues to settle into his new role, and Anthony Mealing, a qualified conservation architect, continues to stimulate us with his free-ranging thinking about what all our Local Plan policies are really for. We have now been joined by one more newcomer, Heather Morley, who worked in sales and marketing for some years, has studied interior design and retail and also does voluntary work for Wycombe Homeless connection. She has shown herself to be a fearless free thinker about the town centre. How can a town with such a strong "narrative" and a long and interesting history be so boring to visit? And if one wants to raise the tone of the High Street, well, tattoo parlours are "inherently tacky"! And if people ignore planning rules, can they not simply be punished? Alas, they can't – planning law rarely involves criminal law - unless you knock down a listed building, or fell a tree in a conservation area. Everyone who is new to the field finds that surprising, and very frustrating! But the Group needs people with that kind of drive, and we are still down on our numbers and we need more.

Local Plan It was May when we (in fact, Trevor Carter on our behalf) submitted our 16 pages of comments on WDC's new draft Local Plan, arguing that, on our reading of the figures, WDC did not need to increase the housing build from the current 400 new dwellings per year to 500-700. On 15th July the Council held a feedback session where, surprise, surprise, consultants told us they had discovered that most people don't want new housing near where they live, but they do want it somewhere else! The trouble is, no new sites are remote from all existing residents! Things have now warmed up. On 30th July we were invited to a session with the Director of Planning & Sustainability, Penelope Tollitt, about the Reserve Sites for housing. These are sites, already owned by developers, which were identified decades ago as being suitable, and indeed were included in Wycombe's Core Strategy in 2008, but have not yet been released for development. Ms Tollitt

went systematically through the Government's policies, and the way they are being applied – whether Planning Authorities like it or not – up and down the country by Planning Inspectors following public inquiries.

The Government, through the infamous National Planning Policy Framework which has replaced the Regional Planning mechanism (abolished several years ago), now requires all Planning Authorities to maintain a '5-year supply' of available housing land and it firmly dictates how the 'Overall Assessed Need' for housing is to be determined from demographic and migration data. The Director's conclusion, which seems likely to be accepted by Councillors, is that *all* the existing reserve sites – Abbey Barn North, Abbey Barn South, Terriers Farm, Gomm Valley & Ashwells, and Slate Meadow at Bourne End, must be released for housing forthwith, leading to development starting in about three years' time. If they are not, then the developers would quickly submit applications anyway, and if the Council refused, there would quickly be a public inquiry which WDC would lose, and development would in all likelihood start even sooner.

For the Planning Group, this is a worst case scenario and, as such, as reported in the *Bucks Free Press*, it has been badly received by neighbourhood groups. We have, however, after working thoroughly through all the detailed background papers, been unable to fault the Council's logic. If we were to seek to drum up local protests (which our predecessors of course did very successfully 50 years ago about another issue) and if we were effective enough to persuade WDC to change course, then the development would occur anyway. Furthermore, if WDC releases the sites now, this would, in their words:

- provide the best opportunity to secure infrastructure, open space and quality from the development, including working to secure at least on third of each site as open space;
- allow for the infrastructure impacts of the four reserve sites that are in/on the edge of High Wycombe to be assessed together; and

- give the greatest chance for local people to have an influence over the nature of the development, by working with the Council on preparing site specific briefs that would set out the 'rules' by which the applications would be assessed.

As we go to press, the Group are continuing to work through the Council's figures, to decide whether, for example, the forecast shortfall of building really requires all five reserve sites to be released immediately, but we may well conclude that the best we can do for the town is to take part in the process of optimising the development that will take place on these sites.

The View in Westminster

It is interesting to note that our hard-working MP, Steve Baker, is very au fait with the arguments and procured an Adjournment Debate in Parliament on 9th July which the Society chairman attended, and where it became clear that MPs all over the country are under similar pressure from their constituents, but there was no sign of any movement from the junior Minister, Nick Boles.



Pauls Row and Frogmoor On 12th June, several of us attended a meeting with HWBIDCo (the body set up by town centre traders to represent their interests on town centre management and planning issues) where we were shown attractive plans to improve St Mary Street (the road that runs past the Swan Theatre) and Pauls Row, and various options for making Frogmoor more attractive and better-used, which seemed constructive and original.

Uplands On 17th June the great news came through that English Heritage had agreed to give Uplands, near Four Ashes, a Grade 2 listing. (*This was under threat of demolition as reported in the Autumn 2013 newsletter*). The Group had originally resolved to apply to English Heritage ourselves but we realised it is a rather specialised area and were very happy to lend our support to Marian Miller and the Chiltern Society's campaign. We congratulate them on this excellent result.

Quality Counts! Tour This year's Quality Counts! tour took a slightly different format. The topic was "quality of architecture" and we will report on it in the *Winter Newsletter*, editor and space permitting.

Chris Woodman

Trevor Carter 1938-2014

It was with great sadness that a number of Society members assembled on 2nd July to pay our final respects to Trevor Carter, long-standing member of our Planning Group and Trustee of the High Wycombe Society who died suddenly on 18th June 2014 after a brief illness. Chris Woodman spoke on behalf of us all at the short service held at the Chiltern Crematorium.

Trevor's contribution will be greatly missed not only by the Planning Group but also by the Executive. He recently co-ordinated and compiled the Society's response to the WDC Local Plan, a mammoth administrative task which he undertook in a highly professional and good-humoured manner. On the Executive Committee for the past nine years he has served as a reliable minute-taker, often encapsulating the essence of a debate more succinctly than any of us could express in words at the time, and always with the greatest level of tact when what we said wasn't quite what we meant. His thorough knowledge across a broad range of subjects and his cheerful willingness to delve into research for detailed minutiae made him a frequent source of reference.

Jackie Kay

Volunteering Opportunity

Could *you* turn a couple of hours each month into some presentable minutes? Or do you know someone who could? Your Executive Committee meets most months on a Wednesday evening. We are looking for someone who would like to attend our meetings, take notes, and produce the official record. No need for shorthand – just an ability to listen for the key points, to write in clear English, and preferably to use email to distribute.

Margaret's Garden- Update

The weather has been much kinder to us on Tuesday mornings during the summer and we haven't had to dodge many rain showers.

We have now been joined by Dave Thomas and Irene Khan which is lovely as we now have a little team and are able to do so much more.

The garden is as lovely as ever and is a real tribute to all Mags' hard work and all the plants she put in it. We do, however, have a request - if anyone has any spare plants to donate they would be gratefully received as there are a few gaps in the garden. Please leave them by the shed and we can plant them on a Tuesday morning - thank you.

Julie has donated a Medlar Tree for Mags and this is doing well.

Julie, Wendy, Irene and Dave

The School Run ... a problem with no solution

IT'S AUGUST, and the traffic flows. Those of us who are not on holiday can breathe a sigh of relief for a few weeks. A problem that has crept up on every town in the land is how to get the children to and from school safely. To take and fetch a child requires four journeys, twice as bad as a commute to work, not to mention the parking issues outside schools. Why has it happened?

Those of us with long memories might remember "Falling rolls". BCC in their wisdom noted that the birth rate had fallen and schools were not as crowded as they were in the post-war bulge days. Given the pill, never again would the population rise and we had more schools than we knew what to do with.

So, they sold off the spare schools and used the loot to do what? Well whatever loot there was has gone, and the birth rate is back up.

As a short-term fix to accommodate the extra pupils, the authorities jam extra buildings into the remaining schools, and sell off parts of playing fields to pay for it. Even if new schools were to be built, the convenient locations have been lost.

I can remember in the case of Sands, a Herculean effort by the authorities to sell off Sands First School, for flats. I still have a report commissioned by BCC saying the building was beyond repair with spalled brickwork, and might even contain asbestos.

However, given democratic protests, and WDC obligingly locally-listing the building, a fortuitous buyer came along, and, after only modest refurbishment the building is now a thriving Nursery School.

Not all schools have been so lucky, and with fewer schools to choose from, and the expanded schools being ever larger, there are inevitably more and longer journeys.



*Sands First School in approx 1973
It has since found new life as a nursery school.
Photo SWOP ref: HWS28610*

Now the Government comes along with parental choice, and the mileage increases again. Parents are naturally nervous about children finding their own way to school, given greatly increased traffic, a poor public transport infrastructure in this car-orientated town, and scare stories about abductions, so what is the upshot? A very large number of four-journey trips to school.

I realise that some parents do car-share, and various schemes such as 'walking buses' can help, but the numbers are too large for these measures to make a significant inroad.

To make matters worse, now we have a proposal to 'streamline' the school buses for the secondary schools making these even less attractive. Other factors don't help: after school activities mitigate against buses and car sharing. Moreover, many families have two cars; so one car is usually at home and the temptation to drive increases.

What can be done? I wish I knew. One school floated an idea of mini buses to various hubs to dissipate the children to locations near their homes where parents could meet them, but most parents would not value this at more than £1 per day, and this wouldn't cover the costs.

Does this happen in other countries with similar populations and transport problems? Could we find a solution abroad?

Nigel Phillips

Automated Chaos Generator

HAVE YOU NOTICED that the phasing of the traffic lights around Handy Cross seems to vary? That could be due to the implementation of SCOOT (Split, Cycle and Offset Optimisation Technique - yes, really!). This computer system monitors traffic flow and continually adjusts the timing of the lights to optimise it. In theory this is great, but in practice – well try it when there is a lot of traffic and see.

I think a couple of red light cameras might have been a better investment as SCOOT does not seem to take notice of the large number of

drivers who just keep going when the lights turn red.

SCOOT has also been implemented along the London Road and on Marlow Hill where it seems to work better, but it clearly has a problem at the Sports Centre where it often fails to notice that there is no traffic waiting to turn in or out. Still, we are assured that the issue will be sorted when the new Hub works are completed. I suggest not holding your breath.

**Malcolm Connell (with thanks to
Arnie Parr for his ongoing vigilance)**

No Parking on the Pond!

I READ WITH much interest Andrew Taylor's stirring account (in the summer edition of this newsletter) of the battle to save Marsh Green from becoming a temporary car park. Those involved may not be aware that this land was until 1948 a mill pond for Marsh Green Mill. Along with the water mill, barn, cottages and orchard went the rent of the mill pond. Lady Redesdale, mother of the Mitford Sisters, bought the estate from the Marquess of Lincolnshire (formerly Lord Carrington) in 1925.

The mill pond had been rented for one shilling by Lord Carrington from the Lords of the Manor of Bassetsbury, the Dean and Canons of Windsor. In 1926 Lady Redesdale redeemed the annual payment for one pound and two shillings which was paid to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. In 1946 the mill closed and Lady Redesdale gave the pond to the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Chepping Wycombe for the enjoyment of the town and its people. Because the pond became choked with weed the Town Council decided to fill it in.



Punting on the Pond c1895

*Photo: Courtesy of the Bucks Free Press
SWOP ref: BFP 46168*

The deed package (SR491A) is held in the WDC offices. I don't think that Lady Redesdale attached any conditions or covenants to this gift but she clearly intended it to remain a pond. When, a few years ago, I pointed out to the (Dowager) Duchess of Devonshire, the last of the Mitford Sisters, what had become of the pond, she exclaimed "If my mother had known that they would fill it in she would never have given it to the town!" I'm sure that Lady Redesdale and her daughters would have been relieved to know that it had not been used as a parking lot.

David Snoxell

To the Ends of the Earth

HISTORICAL FICTION isn't a genre often promoted within the High Wycombe Society. Those of us involved in Heritage tend to be painstaking in our pursuit of accurate historical data. But at Pann Mill in May, a local historian recommended me to read a novel by June Wyndham Davies entitled 'To the Ends of the Earth'. First published in 1996, the book is now out of print, but I managed to find a copy on Amazon for the sum of one penny plus postage.

Set in and around Wooburn in the period leading up to and including the Swing riots, it traces the fortunes of a paper mill owner and his family.

While the main characters of the novel are fictitious, the events which affect their lives are firmly rooted in what is known about the facts of that time, and the book includes a dedication to 'the Wooburn Exiles of 1831' - men who were initially sentenced to death for machine-breaking but then had their sentences commuted to 'transportation', their destination being Van Diemen's Land (or Tasmania as it is



Ash Mill - scene of some of the action in 1831

*Photo: SWOP ref RHW 24382
Courtesy of James Venn*

known today).

The author contrives to send her fictional characters, however, to the Parramatta district of Sydney, Australia in the early days of its settlement, where they also manage to get involved in a mission to the notorious penal settlement of Port Macquarie.

I enjoyed the book and happily recommend it to others with an interest in the events of 1831. As a novel, it's never going to be a best-seller or a classic. But as a guide to what life might have been like in those times, it's a very worthy well-researched contribution.

Jackie Kay

Quarterly Meeting

Commons and Common Land

THOSE OF US who live near commons appreciate them for the pleasure they give during our leisure time. Our predecessors in times past were more likely to be grateful for the supplement that they provided to their livelihood. At our July quarterly meeting, Rachel Sanderson, Chilterns Commons Project Officer, provided a lively account of commons history that left us in the satisfactory state of having increased our knowledge while still wanting to know more.

The story started in 1066. When the Norman barons took over land from Saxon landowners they chose to position their manors where there was good agricultural land, water and wood for both building and warmth. A village would have grown up close to the manor with the surrounding fertile land being used for strip farming. It was the manor 'waste', poor, often high, dry land, that became the common land. It was on this land that the landowner would grant rights such as to grazing, pannage (usually beech mast, generally for foraging pigs) and estovers (wood for fuel, and small domestic uses such as fencing).

Commons connected settlements and provided a temporary place to stay for travellers and the destitute. Drovers might plan their routes so as to take in commons where they could feed, water and rest their livestock overnight. Such men were reliable, trustworthy individuals – entrusted not only with their masters' livestock but sometimes also with their money. Gypsies and other itinerant visitors were less well thought of but welcome as a source of seasonal labour, providers of services such as knife sharpening and pot mending, hawkers of hand-made items such as clothes pegs and small fancy goods and sometimes providers of entertainment. Visitors brought news and ideas to isolated places and also supplemented the gene pool.

As time went by settlements formed around commons. The story went that if a man could build a house in a day such that he could light a fire in it by nightfall he had the right to stay. Those who encroached on the common were liable to a fine but as the years went by the annual fine became equivalent to a rent. On the edge of the estate, away from bailiffs and magistrates, commons had a reputation as benighted, lawless places where men could settle their differences with their fists. Independent spirits without a nearby church,

commoners were attracted to non-conformism, in the Wycombe area primarily Methodism.

Initially meetings might be in the open air or a local cottage but as numbers grew a chapel would be built on or beside the common. Such building was sometimes encouraged by land owners who saw religion as an antidote to less law abiding pastimes.

Successive Acts of Enclosure led to the loss of many commons. We owe our local commons such as Downley, Naphill and Booker to the fact that the West Wycombe estate did not enclose its commons. Overall there are some 200 commons in the Chilterns AONB occupying over 2000 hectares or 2.5% of the AONB. The Commons Registration Act

1965 removed almost all commoners' rights, only those that made an individual application to retain such rights could do so. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 established the right of all to walk wherever they will on common land although riders of horses or bicycles must keep to bridleways.

These days commons have a variety of owners: landowners, councils, organisations such as the National Trust or sometimes groups of people who have got together to preserve an area of common land. As land that may never have been cultivated, commons represent havens for nature: plants, animals, birds, insects, even fungi. None the less they need maintenance if they are not to become submerged in scrub and saplings. Grass cutting must replace traditional grazing and litter and other rubbish be removed. The cessation of traditional management is one of biggest threats to commons. Luckily volunteers are often ready take over this work. Should you be in need of fresh air and, not necessarily strenuous, exercise there is sure to be a group in your area that would welcome your help.

Roberta Wilson

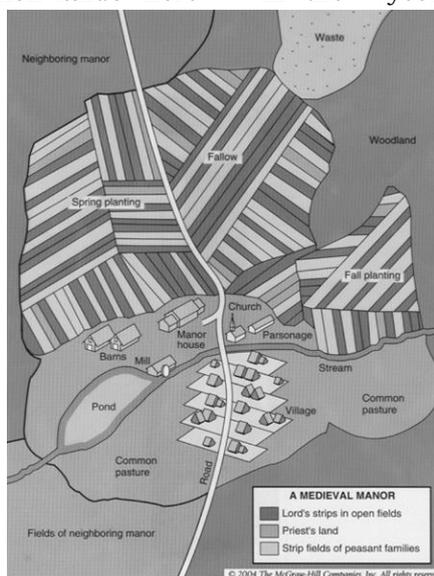


Image courtesy of Chilterns Conservation Board

Behind the Scenes

Six Feet Under? Not in High Wycombe!

IT MAY HAVE become enshrined in the English language as an expression meaning 'dead and buried', but 'Six feet under' is not part of the law of the land, and a twenty-first century Burial Ground manager will readily tell you that a grave does not need to be dug that deep, and in fact it has never been the practice to do so in High Wycombe. For a double occupancy plot, the depth must allow for two coffin heights plus separation (so as not to disturb the lower burial) plus three feet - all this comes in within the 'six foot'. This was the first of many details given to us on our tour of High Wycombe Cemetery on Wednesday 4th June.

Richard Ogden, who now describes himself as a 'friend' of the cemetery, explained to us that the whole of High Wycombe Cemetery is owned and managed by Wycombe District Council. Sometimes people mistakenly think that they have bought their plot and should be free to do whatever they want within it, but all it is possible to buy is the 'right to burial' and even that is for a limited time duration. (50 years – extendable on application). It is the Council's responsibility to maintain the area and to set and enforce regulations.

High Wycombe Cemetery opened in 1855. The earliest graves are nearest the town, by the gates on Priory road: 'Consecrated' downhill to the left, 'Non-consecrated' uphill to the right! Descendants are sometimes alarmed to find their ancestors in the 'non-consecrated' area, but Richard explained that all non-conformist denominations would have shared this area, so there are remains of many Baptists, Methodists and Congregationalists, who would have been buried with appropriate ceremony according to their beliefs. The 'Consecrated' land was reserved for the Church of England adherents only.

Cemetery burial records include not just those with visible memorials, but also very many burials in unmarked, shared 'public' graves.

To walk along the main path through the cemetery is to travel gradually forwards through time. The distinctive War Commission Grave stones are easily identified from a distance amid a variety of other memorials. A recently restored memorial to the victims of the White House

Tunnel disaster also stands out. Smaller plots near the footpath are used to inter cremated remains. The burial areas still being used at the far end are arranged as a lawn cemetery which makes for much easier maintenance.

A small area near the lower entrance on Benjamin Road, the Snowdrop garden, is dedicated to the interment of babies, young children and stillbirths.

Separate areas have also been set aside high on the hillside for Muslim burials. These are characterised by mounds of earth on top of the grave and are oriented so that the head of the deceased faces Mecca. Muslim burial requires a 'burial chamber' deep enough for the deceased to be able to 'sit up'. According to different interpretations of the Koran this chamber may be metal-clad or concrete.

Derek Wingrove, Cemetery Officer, has become familiar with both Sunni and Shia burial practices. He explained that Muslim burials were often required at very short notice and so it was the

usual practice to have burial chambers ready and waiting, although keeping them dry in periods of torrential rain was just another maintenance challenge.

For obvious reasons there are strict regulations and procedures to be followed before all burials take place. It is part of Derek's work to ensure that all the paperwork is in order, a role which sometimes requires great tact and diplomacy.

Our thanks to Richard and Derek for a very interesting tour.

Jackie Kay



Above – Early memorials in the cemetery

Below – the lawn cemetery still in use

Photographs by Rex Wilkinson



Cottage Restoration in Queen Street

MEMBERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE living in Rectory Avenue or Queen Street, may have noticed in the past year some scaffolding on the corner of those roads. This covered West View Cottages, the oldest properties in this part of High Wycombe. There are three cottages comprising a small terrace built in 1883. They were located on part of a field called "Middle Nicholas" which was bought from the Terry estate by Reuben Spicer in 1876. Spicer was a timber merchant and builder of humble origins who became a prominent citizen of Wycombe. In 1883 he transferred the site of the cottages to a much lesser builder, Daniel Lovett, in return for a ground rent. It was Lovett who built the three little brick and flint cottages and let them out. For many years they stood alone in a field, whilst Queen Street was slowly built up the hill.

We lived in Rectory Avenue from 1970 and as our family increased in size, because we liked the area, rather than move, we bought these cottages, one by one, as an overflow. They were not, even when we bought the first one in 1984, in wonderful condition, having received "modernisation" typical of the sixties and seventies, but they served their purpose.



West View Cottages – August 2014

Photo: Malcolm Connell

When I retired, we moved to West Wales; by that time our eldest daughter owned one of the cottages and we retained two as a Wycombe base for ourselves and for the rest of the family. We knew, however, that we would ultimately need and want to return to Rectory Avenue to be near the family and the conveniences of urban living. The cottages offered an ideal size and location if suitably adapted for the elderly (apart from the hill down to Town which we could not, unfortunately, flatten). We have decided, therefore, to restore them to the highest conservation and environmental standards that we can achieve.

This has not proved easy, since we have not been able to find pictures from the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth. The Wycombe SWOP collection includes a view of Rectory Avenue in the 1930s with the cottages visible in the distance but this is later and more distant than we would have wished. If any members of the Society have early pictures including West View Cottages, we would be grateful to see them. Equally, much of the original interior has been lost but some of the original matchboarding in

the stairwell of No.3, complete with traces of late Victorian wallpaper, has come to light.

So, on the basis of what little we do know, the flat roofs on later extensions are being replaced by hipped roofs matching the old structure, and the whole clad in Welsh slates. The windows will be oak sashes to the original dimensions, the cills of Yorkshire sandstone and the doors of Victorian design.

The only disappointment in restoring the exterior is that the condition of the brick and flint walls is too poor to enable a full restoration of the front and so instead the cottages will be clad in an insulating lime render.

Internally the emphasis will be on comfort and convenience. The insulation of the external walls will be complemented by sheep's wool insulation under the roof and the materials and fittings will represent the highest environmental standards practically achievable given the structure and the site.

We are sorry for the inconvenience caused to our neighbours whilst the work is done but hope that they will be pleased with the result and feel that these old cottages have been restored in a manner that is a credit to the Conservation Area.

Douglas Fraser



View along Rectory Avenue in 1930s

*Photo: Courtesy of High Wycombe Library
SWOP ref. RHW 37006*

John Archdale (1642-1717)

IN THE MID 1940s a book was published in America entitled 'Archdale – A History of the settlement and growth of a Quiet Little Quaker village.' The Quaker settlement, once known as Bush Hill, continued to grow and is now recognised as a 'city' with its 11,000 inhabitants. It has been dubbed 'North Carolina's Furniture capital.' The change of name to 'Archdale' occurred back in 1887 as a tribute to John Archdale, a much earlier Governor of Carolina who was reputed to have been a 'good and wise ruler' back in 1695-6; he also lived most of his life in High Wycombe!

Archdale is not the only place in Carolina to honour its namesake. The Preservation Society of Charleston in South Carolina keeps John Archdale's memory alive in its guides to Archdale Square and Archdale Street. There is a Quaker Meeting house there now (although there wasn't during his lifetime). Slightly confusingly the Archdale Civic Association based in nearby North Charleston in South Carolina (nowhere near Archdale, the city, in North Carolina!) claims that the historic monument, 'Archdale Hall', on one of the earliest American plantations, predates John Archdale's arrival, being named after an earlier female immigrant: Sarah Archdale Baker. I can't help feeling that a little investigation would reveal a close connection, however.

John Archdale played a significant part in the history of the Quakers in High Wycombe. It was his grandfather, a vintner from London, who bought Loakes manor in 1604, and the manor of Temple Wycombe in 1628. In 1670, when Quaker meetings were regarded as 'seditious conventicles' and householders allowing them to take part could be fined, John Archdale joined their number much to the dismay of both his family and the vicar of All Saints'; even before the Toleration Act of 1689, he arranged a 40-year lease (later extended to 99 years) on a barn and cottage in Crendon Lane for use as a Friends' Meeting House.

Archdale's first trip to America as a young married man in 1664 was unsuccessful. He went to assist his brother-in-law, Governor Gorges of Maine, but stayed for less than a year. Shortly after his return, he lost both his wife and a young son. He remarried and for a while was a conforming member of the Church of England with a family of four children. His elder daughters Mary and Ann both joined the Friends with him, while his son, Thomas, remained in the Church of England.

Archdale's more successful trips to America began in 1683. By that time he had inherited from his father and from an elder brother, and he had purchased a proprietor's share of Carolina which was held in trust for his son, Thomas. As a trustee proprietor he went out to North Carolina, as a 'collector of quitrents'

Accounts of his career differ at a detailed level, but all agree that the decision to appoint him as governor of Carolina was taken in 1694 and

he assumed the role in 1695. He very swiftly appointed a deputy governor in North Carolina before proceeding to Charles town (Charleston) where he took over from Joseph Blake. In a little over a year, he handed control back to Joseph Blake who continued in the post satisfactorily for a few years.

There are many tales of his time as governor, not least in his own notes which he published later in life. As one modern historian has observed, "these, along with eulogies on his departure, appear to have been taken at face value". He was required to enforce militia law but exempted Friends from service. He helped to resolve long-standing disputes with nearby Huguenot settlers. It would seem that he was also highly regarded by the Indians. His own accounts detail how he prevented escalation of problems with the Indians. Others say simply that he was 'lenient' towards them.

Back in England, in 1698, Archdale was nominated to stand for Parliament and promptly elected to represent Wycombe. He could not, however, take his seat as he was not prepared to take the parliamentary oath. According to Lord Wharton's agent: "The Quakers of this town held a meeting at which William Penn was president and they considered whether Mr Archdale could in conscience take the oath to sit in the House of Commons. They resolved he could not." In 1699 a by-election resulted in his son, Thomas, becoming MP in his place.

In 1700, the Archdales sold their interests in Temple Wycombe and Loakes Manor to Lord Shelburne. John Archdale again bought an interest in Carolina and actively participated in its management whilst remaining in England. Both of his daughters married, one settling in Carolina, the other in England. Archdale's will shows that he still kept investments in property in Wycombe including the Friends' Meeting House and adjacent lodgings. These he bequeathed to two of his grandchildren.

In 1707 he published his 'New description of the Fertile and Pleasant Province of Carolina with a brief account of its discovery and settling and the government thereof to this time with several remarkable passages of divine providence during my time'. The full text is available online.

Jackie Kay

Au Revoir...

AT OUR PANN MILL Open Day in September Joan Hagley will step down from masterminding our Publication Stall after ten years.

Over this time Joan has developed a keen eye for what her customers are looking for. We other stall holders are amazed (and envious) of the amount she raises for the Society by selling her notelets, cards and small souvenirs.



Joan with a neatly laid-out table of publications at one of our meetings.

Photo: Sheila Fooks

Joan has lived in High Wycombe for 51 years, latterly with her delightful cat Nimbus who recognised a welcoming home. She taught at Booker Hill Combined School for over 20 years. Joan joined the Society in 2001 and is also a volunteer at Wycombe Museum.

In between cruises with her friend Eve, (on which we wish her **Bon Voyage**) we hope Joan will still find time to attend Society events.

... and Bienvenue!

A warm welcome to Rex Wilkinson in his new role as our *über* postman! Rex is responsible for delivering our Newsletters to the Society postmen who live on the eastern side of the town. He is a keen photographer, often contributing photos of events for the newsletter, and also a regular steward at Pann Mill while his wife Gill is busy serving teas and cakes.

Mary Woodman

Conversation Pieces in a Digital Age

IN THE ROYAL Cornwall Museum there is a painting entitled 'Conversation Piece' by Terence Tenison Cuneo. Painted in 1950, it features a Cornish Engineering family discussing company business round a table. The Company is Holman Bros. Ltd, who in 1968 merged with Broom and Wade of High Wycombe to become Compair (UK) Ltd. The depicted scene includes in the background portraits of the founder of the company and his sons hanging on a wall. These portraits can also be found in the Royal Cornwall Museum collection.

I know all this because of a delightful website (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/>) called "Your paintings", the result of a joint initiative between the BBC, the Public Catalogue Foundation (a registered charity) and participating collections and museums from across the UK. The aim is to show the entire national collection of oil paintings, the stories behind them, and where to see them for real. Among the thousands of participating public institutions are Wycombe Museum, National Trust properties, and local council offices. Over 200,000 images have already been digitised. Interested individuals can register on the site as 'art detectives' and help improve the quality of information available. I have recently challenged whether a portrait in a Somerset gallery is actually of Benjamin Disraeli, for example.

Coincidentally, I came across a reference to another 'Conversation Piece' painting with a High Wycombe connection recently in the Green Collection at the library. In a Country life magazine article dated 30th March 1945 there is a monochrome reproduction of a painting done back in 1760 by Robert Pyle which is thought to depict a scene inside the

then newly-built Guildhall in High Wycombe. I have to say I'm not entirely convinced of the location, but it would appear to show Lord Shelburne meeting with various named characters including Henry Keene, the Georgian architect, and various craftsmen known to have been employed by him in other contexts: Thomas Gayfere (master mason at Westminster Abbey), Thomas Dryhurst (a carver) and Benjamin Carter, (a sculptor), among others. The painting was thought to have been given to Henry Keene. According to the article, it remained in private ownership and in 1927 it was bought at Christies' auction by Mrs Ionides of Buxted park where it was sadly destroyed in a major fire in 1940.

The Country Life magazine archives also now include an online picture library, so it is possible to buy a monochrome print of Robert Pyle's painting (even though the original no longer exists). The articles, however, are not so readily available and as far as I know there is no army of 'art detectives' working to marry up the pictures with known information about them.

Jackie Kay

Civic Day 2014

A NUMBER OF Society members took to the High Street on Civic Day to ask the people of High Wycombe among other things if they knew it was Civic Day! Few did. We had originally intended to arm ourselves with clipboards and conduct a short survey (as suggested by Civic Voice), but after some discussion we opted instead to hire a market stall to promote the scope of the Society's activities – with a few items for sale such as cards and publications.

A newly revamped leaflet with details of how to join our Society made its debut at the stall as did a separate leaflet outlining the specific benefits of Civic Voice membership to our members.

Thanks to Beth Yorath, we gave away badges to those who stopped to talk with us – one badge had our Society logo on while another proclaimed simply "I love HW".



Our display included posters for forthcoming events and pictures of well-known and not-so-well-known features of our town. Mounted without captions, these acted as icebreakers to provoke conversation about the town with passers-by, while detailed planning information was available for reference in deeper conversations on planning matters. Most volunteers found their hour of duty on the rota passed very quickly. Only time will tell whether

those expressing an interest in membership actually follow through and join, and whether there is a measurable effect on attendance at our next events. We certainly raised our profile in the town, and we were delighted to recruit one new volunteer on the day itself.



Sheila Fooks and Roger Lawson helping to spread the word on Civic Day.

For future events of this nature, thanks to Malcolm Connell we now have a large banner to say who we are.

Marketing Initiatives

EARLIER THIS YEAR, Society Trustee Neil Timberlake agreed to take on the role of Publicity Officer in addition to his role as a member of the Planning Group. Having got to grips with the regular requirements to create and distribute posters for our events, and to place notices in local publications, he is now planning to re-establish an electronic 'Marketing list' to include people we think may like to hear from us and/or help spread the word of our events and activities. If you know of people who you think would be interested in joining the Society if only they got around to it, why not drop Neil a line (nctimbers@btinternet.com) to ask for them to be added to his list? To comply with the Data Protection Act, we won't inundate them with communications and Neil will ensure they have the option to opt- out of receiving communications from us if they wish.

We wish to encourage all members to talk about the Society, but it can be difficult, to answer the question "so what is it that the High Wycombe Society does exactly?", such is the breadth of our activities. To help, we have recently updated

and printed a large number of our 'Join Us' leaflets. The intention is to make these widely available, so please pick up a copy at one of our events, or talk to Neil if you could supply a number to a group in which you are involved.

We are sometimes asked, often at short notice, to help promote other organisations' events to our members via email. We are quite resistant to such requests as we don't want to deluge our members with unwanted email. If you receive emails from us – please let us know, would you like to receive more, fewer, or do you think we've got the balance about right? If you don't receive email communications from us and would like to, please drop a note to Chris Woodman to let him know (chris@thewoodmans.plus.com). He maintains the email database which is also used for the electronic distribution of newsletters.

Finally, you may be wondering about our planned new website – one or two things have taken a little longer than we thought they would, but there should be news "soon".

Jackie Kay

Notices

New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members:

Mr Jim Bradley
Mr Jack Thomson
Mr Joe Arthur

Obituaries

We regret to inform members of the deaths of:

Trevor Carter (see pages 2-3)

Come to hear local historian, Julian Hunt, talk about: **Wycombe's Wharf** at Trinity United Reformed Church, at 7.30 p.m. on Friday 3rd October 2014. Free to members; £2 to non-members.



Daniel Defoe described our neighbouring town, Marlow, as 'A Town of very great embarkation on the Thames, not so much for goods wrought here ... but for goods from the neighbouring towns, and particularly a very great quantity of malt and meal ... brought hither from High-Wickham ...' Julian Hunt will show that Marlow had an even more varied history, as a parliamentary borough electing two M.P.s, as the site of one of the County's largest paper mills, as the home of several breweries, and supplying labour to nearby Temple Mills which had a crucial role in the nation's slave-trade.

Mosque Visit – Book Now!

Following a most interesting visit to the Sikh Temple, and at the request of several members, we have arranged a *Behind-the-scenes* visit to the mosque in Jubilee Road. This was the first mosque built in High Wycombe and is built in the traditional style with a minaret and dome.

We meet on Tuesday 4th November at 10am.

To book your place please email me (mary@thewoodmans.plus.net) or telephone (01494 528106).

Mary Woodman

Forward Planning

2015 - A New Year, a new venue, and a new day of the week! Your Programme and Membership group have been hard at work planning events. Following feedback received from a number of members it has been decided to change our Quarterly meetings from Friday evenings to Wednesday evenings in the New Year; and, after much discussion it has also been decided to return to a central town location. The newly refurbished "Riverside Club", formerly known as the British Legion has been chosen as the new venue for our meetings starting in January 2015.

Useful Contacts:

Membership:	Sheila Fooks	01494 526580
Programme:	Beth Yorath	01494 520514
Publicity:	Neil Timberlake	01494 459004
Newsletter Distribution:	Chris Woodman	01494 528106

Contributions Please.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue of the Newsletter. Please send material for the next edition addressed to me, Jackie Kay, as The Editor at 19 Hepplewhite Close, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 6BZ (Tel: 01494 534876), or preferably by email to:

newslettereditor@highwycombesociety.org.uk

All contributions to the next edition must be received by **20th November 2014**

You can also get in touch with the Editorial Team via the Society's facebook page.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Put these dates in your diary **now!!!**

2014	
Sunday, 14 th September	Pann Mill Open Day
Friday, 3 rd October Trinity United Reformed Church 7.30 pm.	Quarterly Meeting: Wycombe's Wharf. Speaker: Julian Hunt See details and relevant illustration above.
Tuesday, 4 th November Jubilee Mosque 10 a.m.	<i>Behind-the-scenes</i> visit – Register for a place by contacting Mary Woodman on 01494 528106 or emailing mary@thewoodmans.plus.com