

HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

Hon Secretary:
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NEWSLETTER NO, 4 - FEBRUARY, 1970,

1. European Conservation Year

We are devoting space, in large measure, to talking about Conservation. As members of an Amenity Society we are all probably conscious of the current publicity given in the press, and on Radio and T.V., to the problems of pollution. We all know the sort of thing that hits the headlines - oil discharges at sea, chemical effluent in rivers and in the atmosphere at large, pollution by motor car exhaust - in fact a galaxy of pollutants discharged by man into his environment. No nest has ever been more fouled! But if publicity for pollution is currently the "in-thing" the more cynical of us will probably observe that the mass media are likely to drop the whole campaign in favour of the latest fad to hit our civilisation.

So, in spite of the fact that 1970 has been declared "Conservation Year"; that conferences have or will be held across Europe; that Royal approbation has been given, it behoves Societies such as ours to keep up the pressure at local and national levels. Only by this means can the general public be brought to terms with the problems and help to make our world a better place to live in.

As an individual where does one start? Large scale pollution can only be stopped by literally changing our way of life; by controlling the motor car; by proper treatment of industrial wastes; by looking again at the types and applications of chemical fertilizers and insecticides; by trying to find out the long term as well as short term effects on the balance of nature. On the large scale there are political decisions by governments. So you can lobby your M.P. to make him study the facts and prepare himself for future debate and decision making.

On the small scale, have a look at your own immediate surroundings. Think about the effect of your own property on its neighbours. Then think about your immediate neighbourhood and town. Get together with other people - join your parent teacher association - is the school running any conservation projects? Join your local residents association (or form one!). Can you do anything useful in the neighbourhood? Rubbish or footpath clearing, tree or shrub planting in association with the local council? Have you a decent open space for the kids to play on? Get your local councillors along to discuss wider issues - retention of fine old buildings, clearing up the local river, traffic problems, noise - the list is endless.

We are still luckily to live in these beautiful islands. But remember that soaring population will bring great problems and these must not be solved either by short term measures or for the quick "buck" as has happened in North America.

Let us do what we can practically while conferences confer. Offer your time and help to the Wycombe Society.

2. Membership

This is now rising a little faster, thanks no doubt, to the publicity given to us recently by the local press. Apart from the growing list of affiliated societies, the individual membership is increasing. We need many more members in all parts of the town and surrounding district. Pass this Newsletter on to a friend; if you come to a meeting bring a friend.

The affiliation of local societies is more encouraging and gives power to our voice. The following is a list of Affiliated Societies:

Brands Hill Residents' Association.
Deeds Grove Residents' Association.
Hazlemere Residents' Association.
Downley Common Preservation Society.
Central District Girl Guides.
Green Hill Residents' Association.
High Wycombe and District Council of Churches.

High Wycombe Communist Party.
High Wycombe Rye Protection Society.
High Wycombe and District Trades Council.
Wycombe Division Liberal Party.
National Federation of Business and professional Women.
Order of Crusaders.

We are also hoping that the following societies will affiliate to us:

Penn & Tylers Green Residents' Association
Society for the Parents of Mentally Handicapped Children
Loudwater Residents' Association.

3. Third London Airport

Remember, remember W.A.R.A.! Cublington and Wing are still on the list and the final battle will soon be joined. If you would like literature, posters etc. please contact the Secretary. Any donations to the fighting fund would be gratefully received.

4. Town Forum December 1969. Guildhall, High Wycombe.

The Society arranged this Meeting as an experiment as suggested by the Skeffington Report. Much has been written and talked about public participation in planning of late but nobody seems actually to have done anything about it. For a first effort we were delighted with the magnificent public response and grateful to the Chairman, Councillor Milne, and the panel who gave freely of their spare time. With the experience gained we hope to arrange future meetings. We were very pleased with the publicity given by the local press both before and after the event and above all, with the public at large for their attendance and questions.

5. Discussion on the High Wycombe Development Plan.

The Guildhall was the scene of yet another meeting organised by the Society to discuss the High Wycombe Development Plan. Members and Affiliated Societies and other interested parties were invited to offer their opinions and criticisms publicly. Again participation in action.

Although the High Wycombe Society feels that the meeting was extremely fruitful and well attended, many local Societies have not yet had the time fully to digest the Report in detail and thus arrive at detailed conclusions. Nevertheless the exchange of ideas will be of the greatest help to all concerned.

Meantime the High Wycombe Society Executive Committee has appointed a sub-committee to present a full report on the Development Plan. Once again the local press gave the event very good coverage.

6. Railway Line Closures.

(a) Marylebone, Station.

In view of the general concern about the possible closure of Marylebone Station we are seeking the help of our local M.P. and the Borough Council in a serious attempt to keep the station open for people travelling from High Wycombe. Mr. Hall is taking up the matter with the Minister, and the Borough Council are to discuss this very soon.

(b) High Wycombe to Bourne End Railway Line.

The Minister has indicated that he agrees that the additional bus service to be provided will be able to carry the children who at the moment go by train from Wycombe to Bourne End. We are convinced that this alternative will be very inadequate and that many children may suffer hardship especially in the winter time. We are making further representations about this to the Minister.

7. Group Reports in brief.

i) Publicity

The group was very disappointed with the Borough Council's decision to close the Guildhall during the March Festival. The Civic Trust display has been cancelled as a result at least until next year. In its stead we prepared a small exhibition

ii) Outdoor Activities

Mr. John Willson hopes that our Society₃ will carry out some kind of project in support of European Conservation Year and he has suggested that a survey could be carried out of the River Wye and water resources within the Borough. It is hoped to gain support for this idea at our Annual General Meeting. In addition it is hoped that the Society will be able to clear one footpath within the Borough in support of National Footpath Week, which is part of European Conservation Year.

iii) Historic Works and Buildings

This group continues to be very active and the following is a brief report on current work:

Guildhall Structural work is to begin in March as part of the initial process or restoration.

Parker's Factory A request has been made to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government that this fine example of an original chair factory should be protected as a Listed Building.

Old Chequers Inn The Society is continuing with its efforts to save this building from demolition.

Buildings Survey The Group continues with its survey of buildings considered suitable for Listing.

Eyesores and Treasures Lists in both these categories are sent periodically to the Borough Council, drawing their attention to them. This is particularly relevant during this Conservation Year.

Bassetsbury Barn A request has been made to the Ministry for the Listing of this fine old barn, as part of the Bassetsbury group of buildings.

Toll House, London Road Plans for the restoration of the Toll House and improvement of the site have been sent to the Borough Engineer and the County Council.

Pann Mill The battle is still being fought for a suitable building for this site. We have heard that detailed plans for the museum will be placed before the public for their comments.

Park House As a result of the efforts made by the Local Planning Authority, supported by this Society, the Minister has refused the application which was made to demolish this fine old house, and has included the building on the Statutory List of Historic Buildings as a Grade II Building. This is very significant for Wycombe - it is the first time that a building within the Borough has been added to the List since it was first published in 1947.

iv) Trees

Mr. Peters is to organise a survey of every tree in the Borough over 12 ft. in height. He will circulate all members who expressed an interest in the Trees Group to get uniformity of ideas and to divide the area into small sections. If he is able to form such a group he hopes to work in close co-operation with the Local Planning Authority and with Mr. Andrews, the Parks Manager.

8. Social Activities

Many of our members will remember the interesting trips which were arranged by Mr. Derek Woods last summer and especially the fascinating journey in a converted canal long boat. He is now at it again! He has arranged another canal and coach trip for 25th June, 1970. The coach will leave Wycombe at 9.30 a.m. to the canal at Gayston (Northants). The long boat will go to Cosgrove, Bucks, via Blisworth Tunnel and stop at the fascinating Waterways Museum at Stoke Bearne. The coach will return at approximately 7 p.m. Any members interested in this trip should get in touch with Mr. Woods, telephone number High Wycombe 20284.

9. Tailpiece

Once again we would stress the importance of membership - personal contact and recommendation will spread our ideas.

All of our Groups need help. There is so much to do in every field of our activities. We wish to start new groups to take over much of the local planning load and a Water Resources Group to look after such things as the River Wye and local ponds and streams (an excellent subject for the E.C.Y.!).