

HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

Telephone:
High Wycombe 25933

Hon. Secretary:
J. Scruton, Esq.,
17, London Road,
High Wycombe, Bucks.

NEWSLETTER NO. 12 - MARCH, 1972

1. Membership.

We seem to be on a kind of plateau with regard to individual and family memberships. We need to climb again if we wish to extend our influence throughout the town and surrounding area. We again ask all our members to do all they can to interest their friends in the work of the Society, and to recruit at least one individual or family member.

Membership Secretary: Mrs. E. Roe, 3, London Road, High Wycombe.
Telephone: High Wycombe 32575.

2. Group Activities.

(a) Planning

The hopes of all those concerned with identifying the extent to which High Wycombe is protected from unlimited expansion were dashed when the Minister ruled that development might go ahead on the Hammersley Lane, Robinson Road site. Where do we stand? The Green Belt proposed as long ago as 1958 has not yet been approved, which makes the extension to it as put forward in the Planning Review barely credible. The 1954 Town Map, which is the present statutory basis for planning, is out of date and is often conveniently ignored. The Planning Review, although unsatisfactory, in not setting out a time table for the massive release of land proposed, might have set the limit to expansion - but it has no legal standing. The confusion arising from this unsatisfactory situation allows the pressure from developers to succeed more and more often.

The separate identity of High Wycombe and the surrounding villages is under threat. That part of the A.O.N.B. adjoining High Wycombe is similarly under threat. We must press for a definition of the physical limits of High Wycombe. There must be the protection of a positive policy.

The Planning Group is preparing to use this latest Ministerial decision as a stepping stone to asking the Department of the Environment to give their ruling on the role of High Wycombe as capital of the Chilterns. A capital which threatens to destroy its irreplaceable asset of a breathing space for Metropolitan London's recreation starved millions, as it must do if the developers are allowed to have their way.

Deangarden Rise and Cobbler's Farm.

The spectre of Deangarden Rise has risen again, with the developers making a further bid to build on this attractive site, and the Society, with the backing of the Deangarden Rise Residents' Association, has opposed the plans.

Another serious threat is the one to the Cobbler's Farm area, which has also been opposed. If the two sites are lost, the South side of the Wycombe Valley will have suffered the same gruesome fate as that of the North, where practically the whole extent has been swallowed by housing, unrelieved by any form of landscaping or open country.

(b) Historic Works and Buildings.

The Group, acting on the advice of their architectural adviser, has submitted a further list of buildings in High Wycombe to the Minister of the Environment, and hope that these will be included in the new list of buildings of historic and architectural interest. Our previous lists have been concerned with buildings lying in the Conservation Area, but this latest submission is concerned with buildings outside the area, and if approved will provide the town with a much larger list of protected buildings than the one now in force.

With regard to our December Newsletter and the possibility of a face-lift for the Conservation Area, and in particular the High Street and vicinity, we have been assured by the Civic Trust that they would give their support. They have agreed with us that our main hope of success lies in establishing a friendly relationship with the Planning Authority, the local Council and the Chamber of Commerce.

We failed in our attempt to establish another Conservation Area at Castle Hill in the middle of High Wycombe. However, the preparatory work was not in vain as it has led to strong affirmations from the County Planning authority that the area is considered to be adequately protected.

(a) Traffic.

As readers of the Local Press will know, the Traffic Group invited Councillors from both parties in the Council to an informal discussion.

Councillor Harwood outlined a scheme for freeing the centre of Wycombe from traffic which the group will study in detail. Councillor Barber made a number of very important points which gave food for thought. In turn the Group presented its views giving a new emphasis to ancient problems. Currently the Group is concerned with seeing that the Consultants engaged on the Transportation Study Part II are asked the right questions, and, not being able to see the brief, are compiling their own list.

Group Secretary: W. Kraft, Esq., 12, Wellfield, Hazlemere.
Tel: Penn 2724 (Evening) or High Wycombe 353933 (Day)

(b) Water.

The River Survey has been extended through Loudwater, with the active participation of the Loudwater Residents' Association.

Mr. Lucas of the Thames Conservancy Engineering Department spoke to us and representatives of the Loudwater Association on the scheme for flood improvement. Mr. Wheeler of the purification Section of the Thames Conservancy spoke to us on the problems of river pollution and illustrated his talk with slides.

We are deeply concerned about the proposal to culvert the Wye at Snakely Mill, and have had considerable correspondence on this matter, but so far without success.

Work has now been in progress on the Dyke for some weeks, and this will eventually involve reconstruction of the waterfall at the Eastern end, and where the masonry has become dangerously cracked. Roger Henderson has submitted a scheme for supporting the banks, and Patrick Reyntiens has prepared plans for the waterfall. These are under consideration by the Borough Council.

We are indebted to Jill and Peter Morgan, who held a Tramp Supper at Bassetsbury, which was a great success, and proved a most enjoyable way of aiding our finances.

There are many possibilities open to this Group, and we would welcome new members. Some may enjoy active physical work while others may prefer discussion and the planning of projects.

Anyone interested should telephone the Secretary of the Group, Diana Smith (Telephone: High Wycombe 29301).

(c) Exhibition Group.

The Group arranged three Festival evenings and they were all well attended and very successful. On 2nd March they broke new ground by arranging a social gathering in Bassetsbury Manor for Members and friends, and this was a most enjoyable occasion, with much greater freedom of communication than the usual meetings. Wine was sold and refreshments were provided. Our thanks are due to those members who helped to transform Bassetsbury Manor from Dotheboys Hall into a delightful bower, and for providing the attractive running buffet.

On 10th March, at the College of Technology and Art, the Group arranged a mixed evening of Film and Slides. The highlight was Mr. Ewart Steevens, our Chairman, with his unique collection of slides of Old Wycombe. The audience overflowed the Lecture Theatre and much appreciated and anecdotes and dry humour of Mr. Steevens, and the many memories evoked by the slides.

On 17th March we had another evening at the Lecture Theatre, which was again filled, to see two films about the threats to our environment. Mr. Mayes linked the two films with his own interesting comments on the history of the river. This led to further discussion and questions about the work of our own River Group. Our thanks are due to Mr. John Willson for taking charge of the evening, and to the College and to the High Wycombe Film Society for all their help.

1. Meetings.

Our Quarterly Meeting was held in the Wesley Hall on Wednesday, 19th January, when Mr. J. Parsons of Brunei University spoke on "Population Control and Individual Liberty". Mr. Parsons spoke with authority on this very serious topic, and the large audience made their contribution with many questions.

Annual General Meeting.

This will be held in the main Hall of the College of Technology and Art on Friday, 28th April, 1972, beginning at 7.45 p.m. For this meeting we have been extremely fortunate in obtaining the film recently made about the urban environment with the title "A Future for the Past", and which aroused so much interest when shown recently in London. Full details of this meeting are being sent with this Newsletter.

2. Trees.

We are hoping to start a Trees Group soon. We will as a first step call a meeting of all members interested in trees and woodlands.

3. Housing Trust.

We are still feeling our way to forming the Trust. After certain legal requirements have been met we shall then be in a position to seek the help of members and others interested in this work.

4. Social Activities.

Derek Woods has provisionally arranged the following trips. If sufficient members and friends are interested he will go ahead with them. Please write to him at 19, Adelaide Road, High Wycombe, or phone High Wycombe 20284, if you are interested.

Sunday, May 28th or Sunday June 25th. By coach to the Tramway Museum at Crich, near Matlock, Derbyshire. A pleasant ride and a living museum of working trams from different periods in time, set in the Derbyshire countryside. Return from Crich at 5.30 p.m. and arrive in High Wycombe at 7.30 p.m.

Saturday trips in July and August along the Avon and Kennet Canal. The first trip by boat out of Reading, journeying 8 miles to Tyle Mill. The second trip by the paddle boat "Charlotte Dundas" out of Devizes, through the Vale of Pewsey to Wootton Rivers (10 miles). This is lovely Wiltshire countryside, a stone's throw from the Aveley Mound.

A day for the children! If there are enough people interested, Derek will run a special coach to Pages Park, Leighton Buzzard on a Sunday afternoon in August. Beside the Park runs the Narrow Gauge Railway. Journeys by train take approximately 1 hour. Open carriages hauled by 50 years old colliery locomotives.