

HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

Telephone:

High Wycombe 25933

HON. SECRETARY:

J. Scruton, Esq.,
17, London Road,
High Wycombe, Bucks.

From:

November, 1970.

NEWSLETTER NO. 7. NOVEMBER 1970.

1. TWO YEARS OLD.

We are now two years old and slowly gaining in strength. We feel we have made some impact on the town and have helped here and there to "improve the quality of life". We have certainly been very active. We've had a sympathetic press and much publicity. We have earned the respect of the various local authorities. We are trying to form active groups to tackle all the work of a fully fledged Amenity Society. We have managed to form some, but much remains to be done. We need to involve all those members who are able and willing to give some time to a particular interest. Apart from the Groups, we have, of course, received a great deal of help from many members in creating and manning exhibitions, in taking part in Inquiries and meetings, in constructive correspondence, and in many other ways. We are always short of money, but this is a common weakness in all amenity organisations. It should not deter us from following an adventurous way. At all costs we must avoid timidity. Above all we need a wider membership. We need to achieve a break through against local apathy. Your Committee has worked hard to do this, but we realise that we need the active help of all our members to increase our membership. Help us by recruiting at least one more member. This would be the most positive contribution you could make in furthering the work of the Society.

2. OLD CHEQUERS - LOCAL INQUIRY.

This battle took place on 20th October, when in company with the Chiltern Society, the C.P.R.E., and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, we defended this historic building. The inquiry lasted until 8.15 p.m. and during that time our three witnesses - Messrs. Steevens, Britain and Buller, ably led by Mr. Martyn, put up a great fight. Although the publicity in the local press was generous, it could give little idea of the amount of effort and weight of evidence produced. A number of our members and those of the Chiltern Society helped in various ways to produce a document of evidence, photographs and prints, which was a great credit to both Societies. We now await the result with some hope of success.

Because of the length of the Inquiry, the legal fees to be paid are more than we expected. It is hoped that our members will help us to meet the bill. If you can help we should be very grateful. Donations large or small would be very encouraging. Please send them to C.R.Stone, Esq., c/o Midland Bank, Cornmarket, High Wycombe, indicating that they are towards the Old Chequers Fund.

3. GROUP REPORTS.

- a. Membership. This is growing slowly, The Wycombe Show helped. Mrs. Wess our Membership Secretary does need help. We need members in various parts of the town to recruit additional members and be part of a Membership and Social Activities Group. Are you interested? If so, please phone Mrs. Wess at High Wycombe 20718.

We welcome the following organisations which have affiliated recently;

High Wycombe History Society.

High Wycombe and District Scouts.

- b. Publicity. We did manage to create an exhibit at the Wycombe Show, with the generous help of Messrs. Stephens and Carter, who erected a structure in steel scaffolding. The weather was kind and our outdoor display attracted the attention of a very large number of visitors. Our thanks are due to all those members who helped with the many tasks. The final result was very fine and brought to light many latent talents possessed by our members. Our thanks are also due to the Parks Manager and his staff for their unstinting help.

c. Planning.

2

(i) High Wycombe Planning Review.

It is felt by the Society's Planning Group that the present position with regard to the Planning Review is very unsatisfactory. Most of the areas suggested as possibilities for further housing are now under direct threat, and the promised public meetings and exhibitions have not taken place. In particular the members of the Cressex Residents' Association are very disturbed. Major decisions have been taken for the Cressex area but there has been no attempt to discuss these with those deeply affected.

The Society's Planning Group is to meet local Residents' Associations to plan the next course of action to be taken.

(ii) Highfield Wood, Micklefield.

Since our last bulletin we have heard that the County Planning Committee has approved changes recommended by the Borough Council, and that the decision has been taken to carry out the plans for Highfield Wood about which the local residents are incensed. The Minister has decided not to intervene. A local Residents' Association has been formed to continue a vigorous campaign for the retention of the whole of this woodland. We intend to give them as much support as we are able.

d. Historic Works and Buildings.

Quite apart from the Old Chequers Inquiry, this Group has been active. Further lists of eyesores and treasures have been sent to the Borough Council and have met with a ready response. The Town Clerk has informed us that a survey is now being undertaken of the town centre with a view to a cleaning up operation, and in particular aimed at unwelcome advertising. The co-operation of the Society has been sought to bring to notice any examples of Fly Posting. All members are requested to notify any examples to the Secretary by letter or phone. This would be a great help to the Borough Council.

Conservation Areas.

On 14th September, the Bucks County Council finally approved the Conservation Area plan for High Wycombe. This designation will give much greater protection to the older part of the town, stretching from the edge of the Frogmoor down to the Bassetsbury area. It will enable any members of the public and local organisations to oppose developments which they think are unwelcome. We can also look forward to positive proposals from County and local authorities for the improvement of the Conservation Area. As this Society, in conjunction with the Rye Society and the Chiltern Society, made representations to the County to define such an area, we are particularly pleased that this one has now been established.

e. Housing.

We hope to form a Housing group soon, drawing on members who have indicated they might be interested. Some of the tasks which could be tackled are:

(i) Restoration of older housing. The Borough Council has declared a new interest in this and hope to set an example with their own property. The High Wycombe Society could help in spreading information about grants, etc. Meetings with local officials might be useful.

(ii) We have formed an embryo Housing Trust. It is our hope to build this into something really worthwhile, setting our own example in positive action. Members could certainly help here in the most useful of all community activities.

(iii) Undertake a survey of one area of housing, perhaps a single terrace, to act as a model for further action.

4. WING AIRPORT RESISTANCE ASSOCIATION.

In a recent bulletin of W.A.R.A. we noted that one of our affiliated Societies - the Downley Common Preservation Society - managed to raise the sum of £20 in aid of the fund of W.A.R.A., Congratulations, Downley! We hope other Societies will be able to help in this way.

5. EUROPEAN CONSERVATION YEAR.

Scheme for Funges Farm, Bassetsbury Lane.

The scheme mentioned in Newsletter No.6 did not meet with the approval of the Borough Council, as it was thought it would interfere with long standing road

proposals for the area. We intend to ask for further clarification, and hope to persuade the appropriate Committee to meet all interested organisations.

As a result of the correspondence about Funges Farm, the Borough Council has suggested that a Nature Trail might be laid through Keep Hill Woods. Representatives of local Societies are to have discussions with the Parks Manager about the form this might take. The idea seems a very good one.

6. Social Activities.

Our second Bring and Buy Coffee evening held on 25th September was again a great success, both socially and financially. Our thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Clowes of Eyot House., Bassetsbury Mill for organising the function, and to all those who contributed.

7. Christmas Cards.

Mr. Derek Woods, who has in the past produced a series of fascinating Christmas Cards of Old Wycombe, is now having printed his card for this year. This will be very appropriate as it is a print of the engraving of the Old Chequers and adjoining buildings as they were in 1752. The cards will be 9d each. If you would like some of these please phone High Wycombe 20284. If any remain they will be on sale at our Quarterly Meeting to be held on 24th November.

W.A.R.A. Christmas Cards.

For those who wish to help W.A.R.A., their Christmas Cards are on sale at Miss Martin's Gift Shop in Crendon Street. The card carries a charming picture of Dunton Church by John Piper. Cost is 10d each.

8. Quarterly Meeting.

For our next Quarterly Meeting we have been extremely fortunate in persuading Mr. Max Davies, Public Relations Consultant for European Conservation Year, to talk on the subject of The Problem of our Environment. Mr. Davies is a very able speaker and we are sure all our members would find much to interest them in his talk. In view of the vital importance of the subject to all of us we are also inviting all members of the Borough and Rural District Councils, local officials of the authorities, other Societies, and local Schools. We hope that many of our members and members of affiliated Societies will be able to attend. The meeting has been arranged for 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 24th November, in the Methodist Church Hall, Priory Road. At the meeting it is also hoped to hold some kind of exhibition depicting the work of the Society.