



# High Wycombe Society

SECRETARY: J SCRUTON 17 LONDON ROAD HIGH WYCOMBE BUCKS  
Telephone 25933

## 1. GROUP ACTIVITIES

### a. Planning. Plomer Hill Estate and H.3.

We mention elsewhere the formation of the new Plomer Hill Tenants' Association. One of the major problems of this estate is the lack of amenities. This lack creates real hardship and a sense of isolation.

The Planning Group have therefore been very concerned with applications to develop the H.3. Area of the Wycombe Review, since this development will lie between the Plomer Hill Estate and the A.40. We want to see two things: (i) that the new development is planned much more imaginatively than has ever been the case previously in High Wycombe: (The land contours are both interesting and difficult - a formidable challenge to the planners): and (ii) to ensure that the residents of the Plomer Hill Estate derive some benefit from the future development, since this will be the only opportunity to provide amenities for the whole area.

### H.7. - Hazlemere

The date of the appeal for the huge development at H.7 has still not been fixed. The R.D.C., the Hazlemere Residents' Association, and the A.404 Action Committee are co-operating to form a powerful opposition to this development. The High Wycombe Society will also give full support to the R.D.C.

### Structure Plan.

The Planning Group has been taking a keen interest in the Structure Plan proposals produced by the County. The County has been keeping the public well informed of each stage of the development of a Structure Plan, and the Group has been taking full advantage of this and submitting comments.

### b. Traffic.

Mr. Eric Alexander has had to resign as Chairman of the Group owing to other commitments. Eric Hall, who prepared our report on the Transportation Study, has taken over. The Group hopes to expand its membership and activities and would welcome more volunteers.

### c. Historic Works and Buildings

#### Old Chequers.

We feel that it is time a statement of accounts was rendered. The donations received from our members and Affiliated Societies amount to £245. In addition, two of our members have guaranteed £100 each, and the Chiltern Society have guaranteed £200, while several small guarantees amount to £25. The total is therefore £650. A promising start, but there is a long way to go to reach the provisional requirement of £1,200. We have written to 1,000 Amenity Societies throughout the country, but experience shows that, ultimately, success in this type of struggle depends upon the enthusiasm and generosity of a Society's members.

Fund Raising.

On Friday, 16th March, Mr. Ewart Steevens gave a most interesting talk on "Old Wycombe", illustrated with his famous Magic Lantern and a series of delightful slides. This was very appreciated by those members present. The talk will be followed later in the year with a "walkabout" to see some of the features shown. A sum of £24 was raised and we are grateful to Mr. Steevens for a most interesting evening.

On Saturday 14th August, we are hoping for a full attendance at a Musical Evening with refreshments at Bassetsbury Manor, with a programme of 18th Century Music, pianoforte duets, and solo singing.

These events not only help the Chequers appeal - they also serve to bring our members together in a pleasant, informal way.

Toll House.

The appeal for funds to restore this unique building has met with an encouraging response. So far we have managed to collect £506 from local business and industry, and from our members and Affiliated Societies.

We have received an offer from Hall and Co., Thames Valley Ltd., to help with the roof, and Freeman, Dawson and Co., have offered help with timber preservation. Kopak-Walker Ltd. have offered any rubber materials which might be required. The Borough Council are sympathetic and have now asked us to provide plans and estimates for the restoration in order that the question of a Council grant can be considered.

Any further help from members or societies would be welcome.

Desborough Castle

Mrs. Pauline Cauvain, one of our members, has been campaigning for greater protection of this interesting ancient monument. She has consulted Mr. Andrews, our Parks Manager, and she hopes for tree planting to be carried out on the site. This would enhance the beauty of this site and give protection for the future, when some of the older trees will have to be removed. She is also hoping, with the help of Mr. Shackle, the Head of Castlefield School, to interest the local children in the site and perhaps through these means to reduce the amount of rubbish dumping and vandalism.

Conservation Area, High Wycombe

Our proposals for the improvement of the Conservation Area in High Wycombe have now been considered by the various Borough Council Committees, and the following is a summary of the decisions reached:

Restriction of traffic in High Street. Although this has been approved, no action is possible until the Department of the Environment has detrunked the High Street, which is not likely to take place before April 1974.

Improvements to paved areas and street lighting.

It is considered that the appropriate time to carry out this work will be when the traffic restriction scheme has been introduced.

Repainting and improving shop fronts in the High Street.

The Borough Council consider that the majority are well maintained, and that it is unlikely that the remaining shopkeepers could be drawn into a joint scheme.

Frogmoor. The Borough Engineer has been asked to prepare a scheme for a facelift for the central island.

Although there is some encouragement in the reply from the Borough Council we hope to make further representations, especially about those items which were omitted from the Council's reply.

a. Water Group

Since our last Newsletter the Group has celebrated National Tree Planting Year by planting nine trees and numerous climbing plants along the perimeter of Strongbow Furniture Ltd., where it marches with the Wye at Desborough Recreation Ground. This we were able to do by the very generous response of Mr. Williams Bartlett of Strongbow Ltd., who contributed £60 for the trees and plants. If we can get anything like this support from other riparian owners, we should be able to transform the Wye in the Western Desert in a few years time\*. We co-operated with the Trees Group in planting the trees, and must acknowledge the help and advice of Mr. Andrews, the Parks Manger, who ordered the trees for us and supplied advice and planting soil.

We have re-opened the question of the footpath between Chapel Lane and Park Farm Road with the National Trust, and have had a slightly more encouraging first response, although no decision has yet been made.

In the last week or so our energies have been mainly devoted to mounting the Water Group contribution to the Society Exhibition at the Wycombe Festival. The display this year included live flora and fauna from the Wye, and a fascinating display of sewage in its various stages of treatment.

Our gravest concern, however, at the moment, is centred on the very existence of our river. The extraordinarily dry autumn and winter, coupled, we fear, with ever increasing demands from the water table, have led to a fall in the level which would be remarkable in mid-summer, let alone in February- March. The Wye is not only a priceless amenity; it is essential for the removal of effluent from our sewage works. As the present situation is difficult to alleviate, and may well get worse, we feel that all we can do is to express our alarm and hope that our summer will be compensatingly wet; it is difficult to see what the authorities can do to remedy matters. However, the time must be approaching when the whole question of water supplies and river systems should be reviewed, or we may have no river at all in a few years' time.

e . Trees GroupQuarterly Meeting on 31st January.

This meeting was arranged by the Trees Group in order to stimulate interest in Tree Planting Year and it was most encouraging to see such a large attendance.

Mr. Hutchinson, Planning Officer of the Department of the Environment, Mr. Wallbank, District Officer, Forestry Commission, and Mr. Andrews, our Parks Manager, each gave interesting talks on trees and woodlands, from the National view-point, planting policy in the Chilterns, and the plans and projects in our own locality respectively. Many useful questions were asked afterwards.

#### Kingswood, Micklefield

The Trees Group and Venture Scouts cleared rubbish from Kingswood on Saturday, 20th January. This was well publicised and a letter of thanks was received from Chepping Wycombe Parish Council. This led to a meeting between representatives of Chepping Wycombe Parish Council, Mrs. Mary Hopkin of the Environmental Studies Centre, Micklefield, and Mr. Wallbank, and the Trees Group, to discuss the future care of the wood.

#### Bradenham Woods

Following a complaint regarding horses fouling the footpaths in Bradenham Woods, two members of the Group met and discussed the problem with Mr. Rogers, Area Warden of the National Trust. Although no practical solution was reached, this proved to be a useful meeting.

The hedge in New Road, Sands, has regrettably been felled despite strong protests from the Trees Group and the New Road Residents' Association, and two meetings of representatives of these bodies with representatives of the Borough Council. Small compensation was an assurance that trees and shrubs will be planted on the bank when the work is finished.

#### Magpie Wood - provision of Nursery Bed.

Mr. Reg. Davies, one of our members, has kindly offered Magpie Wood for the use of the Group to thin our saplings there for transplanting to a nursery bed which he has made available. It is hoped that work on this will begin in September with help from Mr. Alan Oliver and his forestry class from High Wycombe College of Technology.

#### Tree Planting

Having publicised sites needing trees in the High Wycombe Society's Festival Exhibition, we now plan to approach the various owners concerned to gain their co-operation in planting trees on the sites.

## 2. MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATIONS

This continues to grow. We are hoping that our Festival Exhibition will have helped. We omitted to record in a previous Newsletter the affiliation of the Hamilton Road Residents' Association. The number of threats to the environment of the residents of that area are steadily increasing. There is obviously a great need for a vigilant Association.

Recently a new Association - the Plomer Hill Tenants' Association - has been formed on a Council Estate. This is, apparently, the first Association on a local Council Estate, and we hope the example will encourage other residents on Council Estates to form their own Associations. We wish this new Association every success in tackling the many problems on this new Estate.



6. EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

Many of our members may be interested in an exhibition of paintings by Arthur John Hathaway, to be held in the Library Foyer from Saturday, 7th April to Saturday, 28th April. Arthur Hathaway has lived in High Wycombe for all of his 92 years and has been painting since the early days of his marriage - he still is'. Eighteen of his paintings have been accepted by the Royal Academy and two have been shown at the Paris Salon.

7. RYE PROTECTION SOCIETY - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We have heard from the Rye Protection Society that they have invited Mr. T.E.A. Barclay, the Warden of the Aston Rowant Nature Reserve, to talk to them at their A.G.M. on Friday, May 4th, at 8 pm. His talk will be about the work of the Nature Conservancy and will be well illustrated. The Rye Society would be pleased to welcome any of our members at this meeting.

8. WANTED

Volunteers are urgently needed for the following jobs, all of which are not too onerous and are of interest:

Assistant Secretary. To help with the drafting of correspondence. Typing ability would be very helpful.

Programme Secretary. To plan a programme for eight quarterly meetings each year. There would be a gentle introduction to the job. There is scope here for personal initiative.

Newsletter Editor. To edit a Newsletter quarterly. The information is supplied by the various Groups but it needs knocking into shape.