



# THE HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

## *newsletter*

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### 'Transport Now' 'Bio-loonie' at October Quarterly Meeting

'Bio-loonie'? That is what David Williams, our speaker at the October Quarterly meeting, admitted an old friend had called him after hearing his views on transport policy. Writing in the Spring 1996 edition of the Civic Trust magazine *Urban Focus*, he says he would like to increase petrol prices

five-fold, enforce 20 mph speed limits in urban areas, restrict lorries to a national lorry network, and generally make life easier for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Maybe we should all be 'bio-loonies' if this means saving the planet from the dire effects of too many vehicles on our environment, producing noxious fumes and demanding more and more land. What will happen when people in third world countries have the same level of car ownership as ourselves?

David Williams is the Civic Trust transport spokesman, and every three months he writes a very convincing article for them on the merits of sustainable transport policy. We are fortunate in having him as the speaker at the October Quarterly Meeting, which will be held in the Reggie Goves Centre, Pauls Row on Wednesday 9 October at 7.45pm. His subject will be *Transport Now*. Whether you think you will agree with him or disagree, do come along and hear what he has to say. Bring friends and neighbours as well. It promises to be a lively evening! As usual, refreshments will be available.



David Williams



...caring about our town and heritage

Registered Charity No. 257897

Honorary Secretary, John Gore, 30 Wordsworth Road, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 2UR. Tel: (01494) 526671

## Heritage

### Competition

The Heritage Group invites readers to take part in a competition, and the entry judged to be the winner will earn the contributor the small prize of a book. Anyone may enter, and there is no restriction on the length of the contribution or on the age of the contributor. All that is wanted is a written statement on what you envisage your ideal town to be. However, it must include your idea of 'Heritage' and what it stands for. The winning entry and the runners-up will be published in the Newsletter.

Please send your contribution to:

Mrs Pauline Cauvain  
Heritage Group  
97 Guinions Road  
High Wycombe HP13 7NU

to reach her by the end of November 1996.

Good luck to all entrants!

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## Down at the old 'Firmament and Firkin'

Pub names are changing all over the country. The disease has even been commented on in 'The Times', and the Civic Trust has expressed concern. No longer can you rely on your knowledge of pub names to guide a stranger around town. First 'The Three Tuns' in the High Street, which had successfully traded under that name for some 300 years, was renamed 'The Hobgoblin' a couple of years ago. Now we discover that 'The Angel' in Pauls Row is to be refurbished and re-christened 'The Firmament and Firkin'. Is nothing sacred?

Apparently, the Firkin Brewery, who now own 'The Angel', want their customers all over the country to recognise pubs in their chain wherever they are.

There is no law against changing pub names, and it must be admitted that names were altered in the past, but it does seem a pity that an historic name should be changed to a gimmicky one just for marketing reasons.

John Gore

## Planning

### Recent Planning Cases

Planning applications and decisions made by Wycombe District Council over the past few months include:

**Uplyme, 35 Amersham Road** The Royal Grammar School applied to build a 60-bed boarding house in this special character residential zone. We objected to the plans, but proposed an alternative design which would respect the scale and style of existing houses in the area. The Council refused the application, but the applicant has appealed, and a decision will be made by a Planning Inspector following a hearing in September.

**Rear of 85-91 Totteridge Lane** The Society supported the newly-formed Old Hardenwaye Residents' Association in opposing a planning application to build four houses on back land. Access would have been along a narrow unsuitable lane, and a listed building was affected. The Council refused the application, and on appeal the Planning Inspector also recommended rejection, much to the delight of the local residents.

**55 London Road: change of use to doctor's surgery** The house concerned lies in a Special Character Residential Zone and a Conservation Area just opposite The Rye. The applicant wanted to convert from residential use to a doctor's surgery, and this included making the garden into a car park. The effect of cars arriving and departing on neighbours trying to enjoy the peace of their gardens can be imagined, so we opposed. However, the Council has permitted this further degradation of what was an attractive residential area.

**Wycombe Ski Centre** We objected to an application to extend the existing training ski slope on the grounds that the felling of 30 more trees would have a devastating effect on Deangarden Wood. We were surprised that the Council allowed the application, since English Nature had also opposed the further loss of ancient woodland and considered allowing it would create a dangerous precedent.

**Shrubbery Complex** The Council refused an application for an intensive development of blocks of flats on the Shrubbery hospital site, which we had opposed as unsuitable.

## Planning

# 'The Key to the Future': Wycombe Plans to 2011

Back in the Summer, Wycombe District Council invited everyone in the District to answer a questionnaire to obtain views on priorities for development up to 2011. This will help the council draw up the District Plan to guide development over the next 15 years. Hardly anyone would want to take exception to the Council's main aims; that is, to work towards:

- a caring community;
- a thriving economy;
- a healthy environment; and
- giving value for money.

Differences only arise over how these desirable aims are going to be achieved. Here is a summary of the Society's comments.

**A thriving economy** We agreed that everyone wants prosperity, but warned against overexpansion of industry and commerce as this could well attract more people into the District and increase pressure to build more houses on greenfield sites. The Government wants more development in the Thames Gateway to the east of London deliberately to relieve pressure west of London. We think Wycombe should go along with this.

We pointed out that the questionnaire made no mention of *Sustainable Development*; that is, development which does not use up irreplaceable resources, and this includes land.

**A Healthy Environment** We said the environment would be healthier with fewer vehicles on the road, and with a better public transport system. We also called for priority to be given to our open spaces, tress and woodlands.

**High Wycombe and Adjoining Communities** We could not agree that any of the Areas of Special Restraint (ASRs), which include Comm Valley, Grange and Terriers Farms and land at Sands and Abbey Barn should be used for housing or for a business park, especially land in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We said that more effort should be made to put housing within the existing urban area; for example, more houses should be built in the Western Sector and on former industrial sites. Also, unwanted office blocks and upper floors of shops could be converted. (The Council has replied that while they are seeking to maximise the use of 'brownfield' sites, it will be impossible to meet High Wycombe's commitment of 1500-1700 extra homes between 2001 and 2011 without recourse to 'greenfield' or ASR sites.)

We reiterated our comments on the Western

Sector proposals (see Summer 1996 Newsletter), and endorsed policies for pollution control and waste reduction, but opposed exploitation of the countryside in the interests of tourism.

We pointed out the need for sustainable transport systems, citing as an example our Transport Group's proposal to reopen the High Wycombe/Bourne End line as a light tramway using environmentally-friendly vehicles. This would also serve the Spring Gardens Development Area.

Finally, we endorsed the need for high standards of safety and security in the area, and called for the provision of employment and recreational facilities for young people, and the building of a caring community.

John Gore

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## SERPLAN

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The London & South East Planning Conference (SERPLAN), which is the representative body of all local planning authorities in this region, has invited wide debate about its proposed new Regional Strategy for South East England. We were asked to comment via the County Council, and have now submitted our views. SERPLAN's ideas seem to be commendably biased towards sustainable development. Our response emphasised the importance of making the best use of land, pointing out that our current car-based transport and shopping systems utilise land far too extravagantly. We proposed that a land census should be undertaken, as a basis for setting targets for reducing land occupied by road transport systems.

If you would like a copy of our submission, please send the Hon Sec 50p in stamps with your request.

John Gore

## Transport

### Piggyback – a Rail Freight System

The Central Railway proposal for a freight railway from the Midlands to the Channel Tunnel via the Chiltern Railway and High Wycombe was turned down by the House of Commons in July, much to the relief of those living near the track and by the residents of Denham, in particular. So the desirable objective of transferring as much freight from road to rail as possible now depends on the success of a development by the Piggyback Consortium. This promises to be a more versatile system anyway.

The Consortium consists of an impressive number of organisations, over 30, including Railtrack, Eurotunnel, SERPLAN, freight and dock companies and several County Councils, as well as some Irish and French organisations plus Transport 2000. (We hope such a mixed collection is well co-ordinated!)

The Consortium is studying, with European Commission support, the feasibility of loading (piggybacking) road semi-trailers four metres

high onto special rail wagons. Trailers would be loaded at existing freight terminals the length and breadth of the country and transported to any UK, Irish or Continental rail station for final delivery by local tractor. In this way they aim to remove 400,000 vehicles from the roads each year. Present plans are for a service to commence on the 'spine' route, the West Coast Main Line (Euston to Glasgow), in 1998. We will watch progress with interest.

### Recollections of the Wycombe Railway

My recollections of the railway date from the age of about five or six. As children we used to go to Bourne End by train, sometimes having a picnic by the river, and I was always interested in the railway. I read recently that Maidenhead Corporation opposed the Bill for the Wycombe Line when it first came before Parliament in the 1850s: they did not want to lose the tolls they collected from the bridge over the River Thames! I never saw much of the line between Bourne End and Maidenhead. There might have been a small siding at Cookham, but there certainly was one at Bourne End. This was used a lot by Jackson's Board Mill close by, with a lot of coal and other raw materials going in and board coming out. Coal also went to a local merchant's yard. Incidentally, Bourne End Station was called Marlow Road until the branch line to Marlow was opened in 1873.

Between Bourne End and Wooburn Green there was Soho Mill, with its own siding right into the mill. I don't remember much about Wooburn Green Station. The sidings there would have been used a lot by Glory Mill. I saw much more of Loudwater Station, where the sidings served the two nearby mills, Ford's Mill and Edge Mill. Together they would have needed a lot of coal. In those days I never ventured beyond High Wycombe.

Apart from the regular trains to Maidenhead and the few through trains to Paddington, there were excursions to the sea on some Sundays.

Presumably it was more convenient to join the main line at Maidenhead than in London.

A tale my Grandmother used to tell me might amuse you. She attended Loudwater School, and the railway ran just at the back. Boys used to play what we would call 'chicken' today. They would lie down between the rails and let the train pass over them, with the driver waving his fist and shouting. In those days the track was Brunel's old broad gauge, when the sleepers or ties were much less frequent and there was quite a hollow in between the rails, so perhaps it wasn't too dangerous.

At one time, of course, the railway went on to Oxford, via a branch line from Princes Risborough. Thame and Wheatley have grown immensely since the closure, and Oxford is always an attraction, so I think if the line was re-opened it could have great potential. I would like to see the whole line in use again and I wish the Society luck in their present efforts.

Wulf Long

### Wycombe Show 1996

Our contribution this year will be a display by the Transport Group called 'Climate Change and a Disused Rail Track'. This will present a case for reopening the High Wycombe-Bourne End rail link with a quiet, energy saving tram. (More in our next issue.)



## Events

# Charity Market Stall Mark 2

*Trinkets, treasures, tea-cups,  
Vests, corsets, C-cups,  
Curtains, records, tin-tacks,  
Shorts, shoes, rain-macs.*

*Jumpers, jigsaws, knives for fish,  
Baskets, jewellery, silver dish,  
Scarves, scones, leather bags,  
Cruets, cakes, historic mugs.*

*Funnel, fiction fancy belt,  
Unfinished knitting, scraps of felt,  
Dainty ornaments for show,  
Even plastic mistletoe!*

AW

All the above items were on sale at an additional Charity Stall held in High Wycombe market on Saturday 27 July. Myra King responded very positively to the chance to hold an extra stall, at short notice, alerting a handful of helpers, and hoping that goods would "appear" for sale. They did! Many thanks to all who sorted and priced the items, and to those who staffed the stall. Special thanks to the few members who donated so much so quickly.

A total of £120 was raised, £100 on the morning, and an extra £20 later from a kind member's donation. This money has gone to the Pann Mill account to help with the current work of restoring machinery and dressing mill stones. An excellent morning's work!

Annie Woodward

## July Coffee Morning

Despite the threat of rain and the distraction of extra men's matches at Wimbledon, this event (on Saturday 6 July) was much enjoyed by all who attended. The purpose was to allow members to socialise in pleasant surroundings. The Friends' Meeting House, with a view over The Rye, is particularly suitable, and we thank Julia Wassell and her helpers for their customary warm welcome and assistance.

Grateful thanks are also due to Roberta and Brian Wilson, Joan Collier and Gladys Pearson for arranging the hall and organising the catering. Special thanks to all the cake makers for their efforts, and particularly their generosity, as no

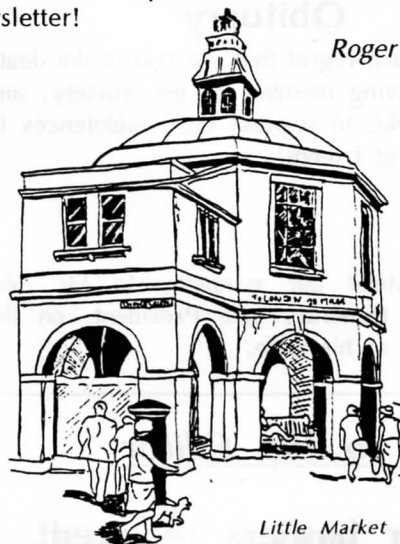
one claimed any expenses. The delicious results were much appreciated.

Entrance monies amounted to £31, sales from the Bring-and-Buy £58=20 and sales of publications £10=60, giving a total of £99=80.

Thanks are also due to one of our members, Beverley Thompson, a keen knitter, who kindly donated several hand-knitted garments for sale. These raised £23, to be given to the Pann Mill account at Beverley's request.

We look forward to seeing you at our next social event - please watch out for it in the Newsletter!

Roger Lawson



Little Market House  
Drawing by Stuart King

## Notices

### Moved recently?

Our Membership Secretary, Annie Woodward, would very much like to know your new address if you have moved. If you do advise her, this will ensure that you receive your Newsletter and any other information without delay. You can contact Annie on (01494) 527978 or at 20 Coningsby Road, High Wycombe HP13 6PY.

Annie also has a special message for Secretaries of Residents' Associations. Would you please advise her whenever there is a change of Secretary or whenever you require another person to receive the Newsletter. Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

## Transport 2000

The Society has affiliated to Transport 2000. This is an organisation dedicated to the fairer funding of public transport, to the encouragement of cycling and walking, to traffic calming in towns and to restrictions on heavy lorries in towns. These objectives fall very much in line with our own Society's aspirations, so we are confident that our affiliation will be beneficial.

## Notices

### **New Members**

We warmly welcome the following new member:

Ms G Melisent, Lucas Road

We look forward to meeting new members at our next event. Please introduce yourself!

### **Obituary**

It is with much regret that we record the death of the following member of the Society, and we would like to express our condolences to his family and friends:

Roger Vere

We also extend our sympathy to Mr John Mayes, our Honorary Life President, on the recent death of his wife.

## Letters to the Editor

### **Car bashers required!**

I have read with interest the 100th edition of the Newsletter and congratulate you on an excellent paper.

I would like to enlist the help of your readers to lobby the District and County Councils to

raise car parking fees in High Wycombe. I see this as a way of banishing the car from the streets of our town. We've had enough of this dangerous, noisy and polluting machine.

The Councils are embarking on a programme of splendid cycleways in and around the town. Let's encourage people to take to their bikes! Through your paper I would like to invite readers to join me in this campaign.

*Name and address supplied*

*Please contact the Editor if you would like to be put in touch with our correspondent.*

### **Not so Magic Roundabout!**

Have you ever traversed the Handy Cross roundabout without being stopped by a red traffic light? Unlikely. On the other hand, have you ever had to stop at every light? This has happened to me, and late at night at that when there was little traffic. It does seem to me that the lights could be much better synchronised at non-peak times to make life easier for the motorist. And has anyone worked out if a series of mini-roundabouts as at the bottom of Marlow Hill might be more effective than so many sets of traffic lights?

I hope someone in authority reads this and takes some action.

*Name and address supplied*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Saturday 21 September 1996 10am  
Temple Street bus stop

Coach Outing to Waddesdon Manor (NT)  
Contact Ron Sims on (01494) 440800.

Wednesday 9 October 1996 7.45pm  
Reggie Goves Centre, Pauls Row

*Transport Now* by David Williams, Senior Planner  
Civic Trust

Sunday 20 October 1996 10am  
Meet in Turville village

Circular Chilterns walk from Turville returning via Fingest. Organised by Ron Sims (01494) 440800.

Tuesday 14 January 1997 7.45pm  
Reggie Goves Centre, Pauls Row

Quarterly Meeting: *Georgian Architecture* Speaker to be announced

Monday 14 April 1997 7.45pm

AGM

Wednesday 21 May 1997 7.45pm  
Reggie Goves Centre, Pauls Row

Wycombe Arts Festival: *Hidden Bucks (Part 2)*  
by Jean Archer

Saturday 7 June 1997 8am-noon  
Little Market House

Charity Market Stall