



High Wycombe Society

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

NEWSLETTER NO. 27 - WINTER 1975/76.

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

Of prime concern to any Amenity Society is the need to maintain, and if possible increase, its membership. With such a highly mobile population and so many competing interests, it is no easy matter to do this. We appeal to ALL our members to help us by recruiting one member from among friends or relatives. If we are to influence the course of events in Wycombe District, we must have more muscle power. Please help us NOW by making good use of the form attached. If you need more than one please let the Hon. Secretary know.

Within the Society there are many jobs awaiting urgent attention. Some are individual tasks which can be done in the quiet of your attic. Others involve working with pleasant companions in our various groups. Details of these are given below. If you are interested please contact the person mentioned: we do need YOUR help.

Group

Planning & Traffic (for those really interested in the future pattern of our town.

Trees, Woodlands, and Woodland Clearances.

Water Resources, Rivers and Streams.

Historic Buildings & Conservation.

Social Activities.

Publicity & Membership.

Exhibitions.

Person to contact

Mrs. R. Shooter, Vale Cottage, Downley. H.W. 26964.

Mrs. B. Rippington, 52A Booker Lane. H.W. 26616.

Mrs. S. Latimer, Marsh Green Mill, Bassetsbury Lane. H.W. 30389.

Mrs. J. Tully, 107 Cock Lane. Penn. 3253.

Mrs. F. Alexander, 3 Mayhew Crescent. H.W. 25915.

Mrs. E. Roe, 3 London Road. H.W. 32575.

Hon. Secretary.

Individual Tasks

Typing - Programme Secretary -
Press Officer.

Hon. Secretary.

PATRICK REYNTIENS

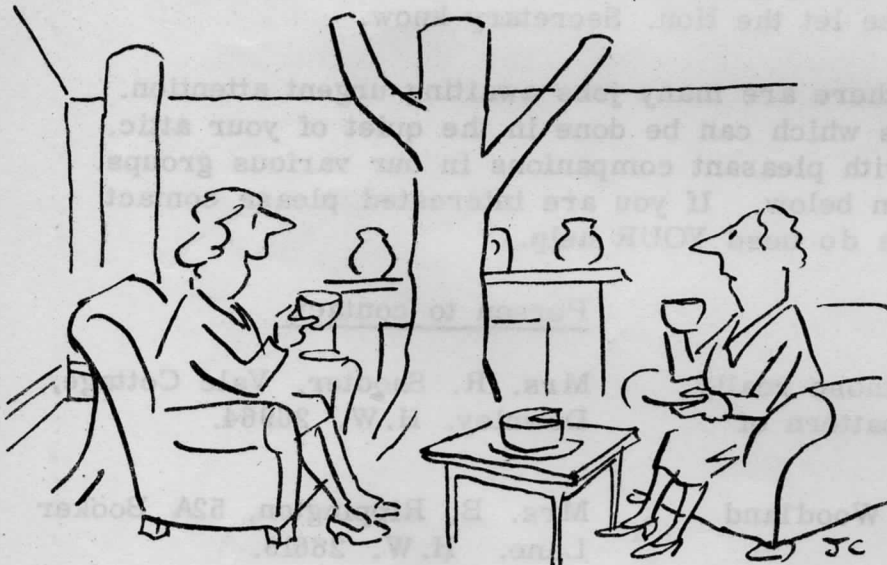
In the New Year's Honours List we were delighted to read that our President, Patrick Reyntiens, had been awarded the O.B.E. Patrick's reputation as a stained glass artist and craftsman is an international one, and this recognition of his unusual talents and dedication is one which has been richly deserved.

Finally, a big thank you to all our members and Affiliated Societies for their help in 1975, and wishing everyone the happiest possible year for 1976.

Ted Kearney. Chairman.

PLANNING GROUP

Rosemary Close, West Wycombe Road



WE PRESSED FOR THE MAXIMUM
RETENTION OF TREES.

A decision was given recently with regard to the proposal to develop land adjacent to Rosemary Close in the West Wycombe Road. The application to build along this section of the A.40 was opposed by the Wycombe District Council, the Rosemary Close Resident's Association, other local residents, and this Society. The Secretary of State has agreed with the Inspector's recommendation to build on this site. This decision is a great disappointment as it will swallow the attractive piece of land separating High Wycombe from West Wycombe, generate more

traffic on the A.40, and bring about a serious deterioration in the appearance of the whole area. It was felt that there are places in the town centre which are more suitable for housing.

We shall watch carefully for the detailed plans for the area and will press strongly for the most attractive layout possible, with the maximum retention of trees.

Land at Micklefield Estate

The very attractive piece of scrub land, which lies between Micklefield School and King's Wood, was under threat of development. This land performs a number of vital functions. It is a natural barrier and backcloth, it offers protection to the School, and is a favourite recreational area. Above all, it is a beautiful place full of interesting chalk flora and fauna. We pleaded with the District and County Councils to spare this important area and we have been informed that the threats have been removed, although they may return. Such is the habit of unpleasant planning applications.

Hugh Osborn.

M. 3. Bellfield.

Recently we have met representatives of Bellfield Residents' Association in order to discuss the future of the land near to them known as M. 3. We asked them to let us have an article about the development problems, as we felt these were of interest to many others in the town. Here it is:

A SUMMARY OF THE EFFORTS OF THE BELLFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

For members of the Wycombe Society who are not familiar with H3, this is the white land north of West Wycombe Road roughly extending from Bellfield Road to Southfield Road, on which it is intended to erect 500 Council properties, with an access road under the Railway Track to West Wycombe Road opposite Desborough Avenue. The Wycombe District Council's original plan was to erect the houses in two phases, but they are now considering this as a single-phase operation. The planning consent has the proviso that, "No dwelling should be inhabited until the underbridge is completed".

When the proposal to develop was made, our Association was concerned that the site should be properly landscaped to blend with the surrounding area, particularly as it is in such a commanding position and can be seen from practically the whole of the town. In addition, we wished to see the existing footpaths and rights of way retained. We also firmly expressed our view that the new access to West Wycombe Road should be built before any of the site was developed and that this link should then be used for construction traffic.

It is this last point that has involved the greatest amount of correspondence with the W.D.C. Housing Services Committee and the Wycombe District Council. Our fears are that, if the access to West Wycombe Road is not built first, construction traffic will use Hughenden Avenue for access. We are objecting to this for reasons of road safety (there are three schools in the vicinity of Hughenden Avenue), noise and pollution, based on past experience when the Council developed the land between Bellfield Estate and Downley, and more recently the building of the Middle School in Garratts Way.

In an attempt to avoid the above, we are trying to press into use the unused Plantation Railway Bridge situated near the goods yard and a short distance from the proposed bridge.

Our efforts have involved a petition by members, a detailed plan showing width of the bridge and the gradients leading to it, and a letter to all councillors seeking their assistance to encourage the District Council to use this bridge during construction. As a result, a recommendation has been tabled by the Housing Services Committee that the bridge be used by construction traffic until the underbridge is constructed. The cost for putting the Plantation Bridge into use will be £20,000.

We seek assistance from all organisations to help ensure this recommendation is in fact acted upon.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP

Old Chequers

The hearing of the Public Inquiry has been postponed, while the owners are investigating afresh the feasibility of restoring the building themselves. There is hope that work may be put in hand by the Spring. It would be unhelpful to say any more at this stage except, perhaps, to observe that the owners are believed in their investigations not to be canvassing the views of casual passers-by, as the Midweek Free Press appears to have been doing with such astoundingly predictable results.

Walter Kraft.

Toll House

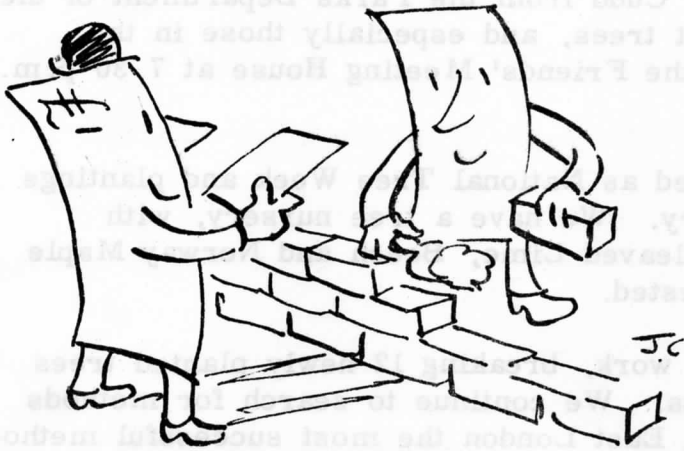


By the time the next Newsletter is written, it is hoped that restoration of the Toll House will be on its way. In the meantime, the Society has a not too difficult task to perform: viz, the sorting and clearance of rubble. Every brick, and even half brick, and each piece of wooden window frame, sash, or part door, metal door furniture, etc. needs to be put to one side, and the remainder loaded in a skip for disposal.

If any members feel they could help in this direction, will they please contact me at 13 London Road. Phone: H. W. 29680.

Jim Cottrell.

Toll House Appeal —



Putting your money to work.

If the building could be restored, it would not be a replica, as over two-thirds of the Toll House are still there. It would be ironic if this project to celebrate E.A.H. Y. should culminate in a demolition job instead. As many as 40 local firms and many individuals contributed to our Appeal Fund, in addition to our own members and Affiliated Societies.

If any member or Affiliated Society would like to offer further financial help, Jim Cottrell at 13 London Road, would be glad to receive donations made payable to "The Toll House Appeal Fund".

Jim Cottrell.

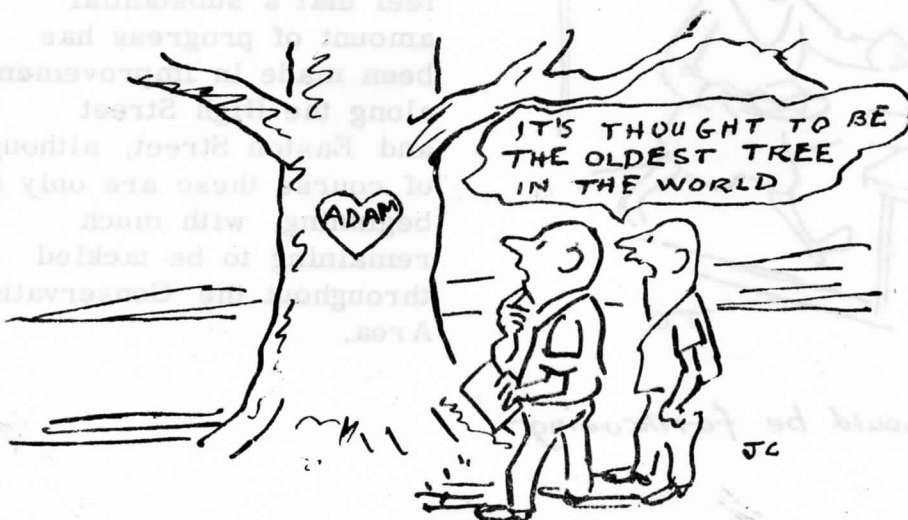
WATER GROUP

Pann Mill Water Wheel

Recently a group of stalwarts, armed with a variety of "tools", including a very weighty beam, succeeded in turning this fine old wheel. Muscle power, plus a fair measure of cunning won the day and we are now confident that the wheel will turn easily when the water is diverted. The next task is to produce a sluice gate by some means or other. Later on it might be possible to restore the machinery to working condition, but that is perhaps a long term project.

Anthony Smith.

TREES GROUP



We have persisted with enquiries regarding the felling of trees in Branch Wood since many of our members and residents in the locality do not share the views of the Dashwood Estates and the Forestry Commission that this is being done in the most satisfactory manner.

We hope to arrange a meeting with a representative of the agents to discuss the matter.

On Monday, March 1st, Mr. Cudd from the Parks Department of the G.L.C. will be talking to us about trees, and especially those in the G.L.C. Parks. This will be at the Friends' Meeting House at 7.30 p.m. All are welcome.

March 1st to 6th is designated as National Tree Week and plantings will take place all over the country. We have a tree nursery, with Wych Elm, Austrian Pine, Small-leaved Lime, Beech and Norway Maple available at cost for anyone interested.

Vandals continue their rapid work, breaking 12 newly planted trees at Desborough Castle within 3 days. We continue to search for methods of combating this and hear that in East London the most successful method has been continual replacement, the vandals giving up eventually! Vandalism by a statutory body was carried out on a fine row of poplars in front of the Waterworks in Easton Street, but we are assured by an arboriculturalist called in by the Wycombe District Planning Department, that the trees will rapidly grow again. It is sad to learn that such authorities as the East Anglia Waterboard should carry out such work without reference to anyone in the area, apparently ignorant of the fact that this was in the Conservation Area.

We shall be undertaking walks of interest again in the Spring, Summer and Autumn and joining the Chiltern Society on theirs. Details of these in our next Newsletter.

Barbara Rippington.

EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL YEAR COMMITTEE

With the ending of Architectural Heritage Year has come the end of the Joint Heritage Committee, the last meeting of which took place on 8th January. We feel that a substantial amount of progress has been made in improvements along the High Street and Easton Street, although of course these are only a beginning, with much remaining to be tackled throughout the Conservation Area.



"a great deal of help would be forthcoming-

We would like to pay a tribute to the District Councillors and Officers for their co-operation and enthusiasm throughout the year and for all the hard work put into the project.

It is hoped that the work will carry on in some form or other. This would have to be accomplished by the Society, in view of the difficult District Council financial position. It is important that we should continue. The prime need is for a co-ordinator or Secretary. Any volunteer to carry out this worthwhile task is asked to contact the Hon. Secretary. The introduction to the job would be gentle and a great deal of help would be forthcoming from various quarters. Any other members who would like to join the Group would be welcome.

Plaque for the Ruins of St. John's Hospice, Easton Street.

To round off the work of the E.A.H.Y. Committee, a plaque was unveiled on 11th January at the Ruins of St. John's Hospice in Eastern Street by Councillor Kirkwood, our Town Mayor. This important monument of the 12th and 13th Centuries has always needed this to give some indication of its long and interesting history. Mr. Kipping of the College of Art and Technology was responsible for the plaque and lettering, and we are sure that all those who pass this spot in future will appreciate his fine workmanship. To mark the occasion Martin Pearson, of the District Council, prepared an interesting short history of the Hospice. This has been illustrated by Lorna Cassidy with one of her delightful sketches and distributed by the District Council, as widely as finances would allow.

Jack Scruton.

THE SHAPE OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IN 1979

Eric Alexander, Chairman of the Liberal Association, is particularly interested in the problem of future Electoral arrangements, so we asked him to write an article about this. Here it is.

Anyone concerned about the quality and effectiveness of district councillors should look carefully at the Boundary Commission's "review of electoral arrangements" currently on view at the High Wycombe Municipal Offices, Queen Victoria Road.

The review proposes a re-drawing of ward boundaries in the area of the old Borough of High Wycombe. It also affects Marlow, Wooburn/Bourne End, and Great Marlow (where the proposal is to split the parish into two wards). Parish boundaries are not under review at present.

The main criterion for the changes is that no ward shall be so big that it elects more than three district councillors. That means cutting each of High Wycombe's six-member wards into two - at least.

Members of an amenity society may be expected to take an interest on at least three counts:-

1. What is the size of each ward to be? You may believe that a single-member ward is the nearest approach to a natural community, and that it gives the greatest opportunity for election of a councillor who really has the interests of the area at heart. Or you may take the view that in a three-member ward there is a better chance of finding a councillor who can help with your particular problem - there are too many council committees for any one councillor to be on all. Either way you will want to see what the proposals are, and to send in your comments.
2. In splitting up the town, have any "natural areas" been split in two? Residents' associations will be particularly interested in this point.
3. What shape are the wards? Do they "cobble together" areas with widely differing problems?

The answers are on the map at the District Council offices. I have made myself a copy, and Jack Scruton also has one. But just to wet your appetite

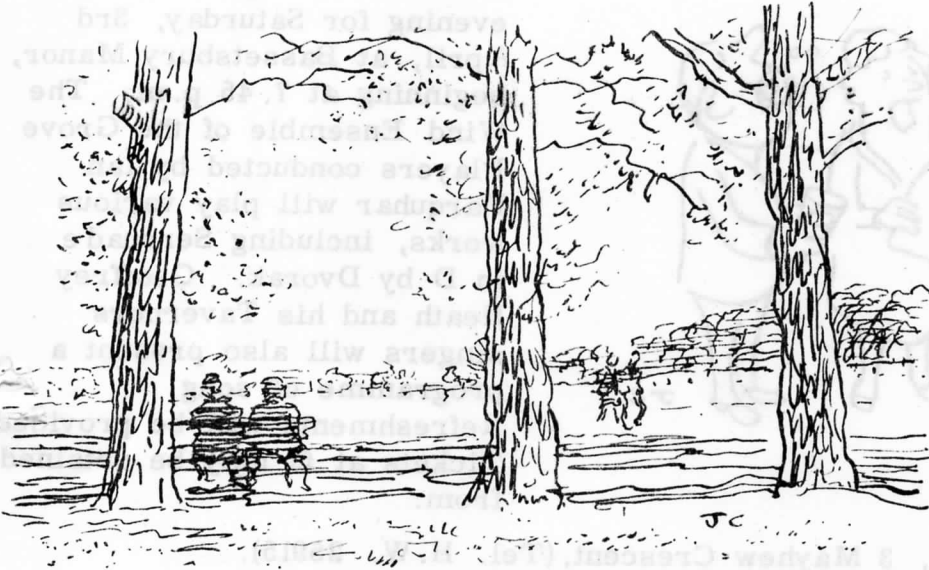
The proposals are for eight three-member wards, with interesting names "Hughenden Park and Cressex" ward includes Hughenden Park and Coates Lane, but not Disraeli Crescent, Tancred Road and turnings off. It also includes Deeds Grove and Cressex Road as far as the Turnpike Part of the boundary between "Green Hill and Totteridge" ward and "Bowerdean and Daws Hill" ward passes along Lucas Road Deangarden Rise is in "Micklefield and Wycombe Marsh" ward, but Bassetsbury Lane is in "Keep Hill and Hicks Farm" ward..... The southern end of Priory Road forms the boundary between two wards, and the northern end is in one of them - but the middle is in a third ward.

The Liberal Association looked at the proposals and were so appalled that they asked one of their members to prepare an alternative scheme. Anyone interested please contact me (H.W. 25915) or Tim Andrews (H.W. 20040).

THERE IS NOT MUCH TIME. The Boundary Commission for England (Room 123, 20 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TJ) wants all comments by 28th January. If there is much controversy they should send a Commissioner to Wycombe to hold a meeting - probably in March. After that their report goes to the Home Secretary. The scheme, finally approved will take effect in time for the district council elections in 1979.

But if you don't like their proposals, please don't get too cross with the Boundary Commission. They have the whole country to worry about, and the basis for their proposals was a scheme produced by Wycombe District Council.

Registration of the RYE.
Commons Registration Act of 1965.



The last Newsletter included a report on proceedings before a Commons Commissioner at Aylesbury in October. In mid-November the Commons Commissioner issued his written decision, which as one might have expected, and as reported in the press, indicated that the Commissioner felt unable to confirm the registration of the Rye as a Town Green. The decision was not thought to be entirely satisfactory and the Rye Society has accordingly called upon the Commissioner to state a case for the purposes of an appeal to the High Court. At the

same time, the Rye Society has placed the matter in the hands of Counsel specialising in these matters.

Derek Woods.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES GROUP

Winter Wassail

On Friday, 5th December, we held a Winter Wassail in the Multi-Racial Centre in St. Mary's Street, when about one hundred members and friends came. This was a most enjoyable evening and rather different from previous social occasions. Walter Newall, in his traditional smock, set the scene by singing the Wassail song to accompany the drinking of Doug Hodson's potent punch. Ron Rogers entertained delightfully with his electric organ, followed by Doug Hodson's Sing Along of favourite melodies. John Barra, a native of remote Barra, played and sang traditional Scottish songs with his guitar and accordion, followed by the earth shaking Oscar and his group, with music and song, and finally dancing.

We would like to thank Doug Hodson for the tremendous amount of work and time in arranging such a varied evening and also the artistes for their skill and enthusiasm. We are also grateful to Florrie Onslow, Marjorie Nash, Ena Perkins and Frances Alexander for their great support. We did make a profit of £31 and this has helped to reduce our Old Chequers debt, which is now very small.

Musical Evening



We have arranged a musical evening for Saturday, 3rd April, at Bassetsbury Manor, beginning at 7.45 p.m. The Wind Ensemble of the Grove Players conducted by Ian Farquhar will play various works, including Serenade in D by Dvorak. Geoffrey Heath and his Taverners singers will also present a programme of song. Refreshments will be provided. Tickets at £1 may be obtained from:

Frances Alexander, 3 Mayhew Crescent, (Tel. H.W. 25915).

Christine Clowes, Eyot House, Bassetsbury Mill, Bassetsbury Lane. (Tel. H.W. 30694).

CHILTERN SOCIETY

Full marks to the Chiltern Society for its interesting Newsletters. The latest one (No. 59) is full of interest, dealing with many Chiltern topics and problems, and demonstrating very clearly that the Society is more than ever a vigorous and effective champion of the Chiltern area. Keeping a watchful eye on such a large area requires a continuous effort, and all those who live and work in the Chiltern countryside should be grateful for the dedicated work carried out on their behalf.

The Chiltern Society is organising a Competition open to all members and non-members under the title "Chilternscape '76", with separate classes for professionals, amateurs and juniors, with generous money prizes. If you have a good idea for improving some part of our Chiltern area, try sketching or painting it, or draw up a plan. Preliminary two-dimensional ideas may be needed by 30th April. Application forms and rules should be available soon from the Chiltern Society.

FESTIVAL EXHIBITION

The Society is staging an Exhibition as part of the Wycombe Arts Festival. This will take place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, from 15th March to 27th March inclusive, except Sunday. In past Exhibitions our members have always manned them and found the task enjoyable. If any member would like to help us to look after the Exhibition for any period of two hours, the Hon. Secretary would be glad to hear (after 5.30 p.m.).

COMING EVENTS.

Please make a note of the following in your diary and come along if you can.

Friday, 27th February at the Friends' Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe, at 7.45 p.m. Chris Wallis of the Chiltern Society will talk about the Restoration of the Lacey Green Windmill. A Fascinating battle against what seemed to be insuperable odds.

- * Monday, 1st March at the Friends' Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe, at 7.30 p.m. Mr. Cudd of G.L.C. Parks Department will talk about trees and especially trees in the G.L.C. Parks.

Monday, 15th March to Saturday, 27th March, inclusive Exhibition by High Wycombe Society in the Guildhall daily from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., as part of the Wycombe Arts Festival. The exhibition will show the varied activities of the Society.

- * Friday, 26th March at the Friends' Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe at 7.45 p.m. Ivan Sparkes, Librarian and Curator, will talk about Materials in Local History. He will bring along local original documents and other material of great interest.

- φ Saturday, 3rd April, at Bassetsbury Manor, beginning at 7.30 p.m. Musical Evening with Grove Players and the Taverners. See separate notice in this Newsletter.

- φ Friday, 30th April - Annual General Meeting at the Guildhall, High Wycombe, beginning at 7.45 p.m. Further details will be published later.

Friday, 28th May, at the Friends' Meeting House at 7.45 p.m. - Lorna Cassidy will talk about High Wycombe as seen by the Artist, and will show some of her work and methods.