



High Wycombe Society

HON.

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

NEWSLETTER NO. 28 - SPRING 1976

TREE PLANTING PHILOSOPHY

Plant a tree in '73



Plant some more in '74

Keep 'em alive in '75



A nice mix in '76

It'll be heaven in '77
(-or later, for tree-planting is an on-going process)

J.C.

TREES GROUP

As trees are bursting into leaf after Winter's dormancy, so our group greets the Spring with renewed energy as expressed in our recent activities.

National Tree Week

An event of major importance was the Tree Council's designation of March 6th - 14th as National Tree Week, the response to which was very encouraging both locally and nationally. We began the week with a most informative talk and slide show by Mr. Michael Cudd, G.L.C. Parks Department, illustrating some of the problems and solutions in urban street planting. During the week small trees from our nursery bed and larger ones from Magpie Wood, by kind courtesy of Mr. Reg Davies, were planted in 9 junior and middle schools in High Wycombe. The District Council Parks Department in a laudable effort to replace Desborough Castle trees planted 4 groups of three Beech trees in the centre of the castle on Thursday, March 11th. The Mayor, Councillor Kirkwood, Councillor Ensor and one of our members was each invited to plant one group. Finally, on Saturday 13th, we gained great pleasure in presenting to the Mayor, for the town, two London Plane trees in tubs to be sited in Frogmoor. This we feel is an ambition fulfilled since "Trees For Frogmoor" has been one of our themes since our formation. The staff of Messrs. John Hearn have kindly agreed to water them for us, and we hope that this will be followed in time by permanent establishment of trees there. Now the planting is done, aftercare is the responsibility of all of us, so please if you have newly planted trees in your area help to water them regularly through the Spring and Summer, especially in dry periods.

Paul's Row

Some of you may have noticed the small garden now being established at 11, Paul's Row. This is the result of an idea thought up by the Secretary of our Society during EAHY, the District Council kindly leasing the land to us for this purpose. Funds were raised by generous donations at the last Quarterly Meeting.

The staff of Messrs. Kean have kindly agreed to water the garden for us, although the sparrows have left very little grass seed to trouble with! We should like to follow with further efforts elsewhere, the prime requirement now being more manpower. Volunteers please!



Finishing touches to Pains Row.

Wood clearances continue and the clearance of Castlefield Woods in February, with children from Castlefield School, will be followed by Castlefield 2 on Saturday, April 24th.

Clean up the Countryside Week

March 21st-27th was National Clean up the Countryside Week and our special thanks to the Booker Lane Gang for their efforts in the lanes leading to Mill End Recreation Ground. Some of you may remember last year the 'Gang' spent many of their summer evenings watering trees newly planted on the local green. This year, they have formed a 'Wombles' group and have already cleared two lanes of rubbish with a third yet to be done. The 'Gang' are: Jennifer McCaffrey, Avril Barnett, Dawn Reilly, Anne-Marie and Simon Crichel, Jennifer and Stephen Hargrove, Susan Timpson, Louise Rippington. Their faithful support helps to keep our group going.

Plant Sale

We should like everyone to consider their gardens with special care this year, as on Saturday, September 25th, we shall be holding a fund-raising plant sale, for which we hope you will donate all your plants and seeds surplus to your requirements - so remember, come along and buy the plants you've coveted so long in your neighbour's garden! Don't throw out anything until we've seen it!

Problems

On March 19th, the Group Secretary attended a Chiltern Society discussion "The Threat to Trees". If Dutch Elm Disease worries you, start reaching for your tranquilisers. Plane Tree disease on the Continent and Oak disease in America are standing by waiting for a lift across to Britain. How can this be prevented? Much tougher restrictions on importation of all raw wood - including crates and packing cases.

Many High Wycombe members on joining have expressed special interest in trees. Alas, on contact it seems most of them haven't time to become involved. Involvement is urgently needed - if you are able to help in any of our activities, please contact me, I am spending a fortune to hear "no"!

Barbara Rippington
High Wycombe: 26616.

PLANNING GROUP

Draft County Structure Plan

This has now been published and a summary of the County proposals has been widely circulated in the free Newspaper "Buckinghamshire - The Way Ahead". This includes a questionnaire and the County authorities are very anxious that large numbers of these are completed and returned. Many of our members have obtained the Newspaper at our recent Exhibition. Copies are available in the Public Library or at our A.G.M. We urge all our members to complete the questionnaire and send it off before 31st May. We are devoting our Annual General Meeting on 30th April to a talk by the Assistant County Planning Officer, Mr. Vowles, to be followed by a discussion and a vote from the Society on the issues involved. This is a unique opportunity for everyone to take part in the future planning of our County and town. The County authorities have to satisfy the Secretary of State that the public has been given a full opportunity to participate, so please help them by responding to their invitation.

Restricting Traffic in the High Street

Recently, we have renewed our plea for the introduction of the scheme to restrict traffic in the High Street. The plan has been approved by the District and County Councils and we are now hoping for some swift action. At least 130 schemes giving the pedestrian exclusive, or nearly exclusive use of streets have been established in Britain, bringing great benefit not only to pedestrians, but also the traders as well. It is high time the long awaited Wycombe plan came to fruition. To shop in comfort, without noise, fumes and danger must be everybody's wish. Cleared of vehicles, we would be able to see that we really do have a very fine High Street, with a rich mixture of attractive buildings.

Habitat 1976

In Vancouver, in June, the nations of the world are meeting to discuss the great problem of human settlements under the title of "Habitat". The conference will really be about the future of the human race and the enormous obstacles to be overcome to provide a reasonable standard of life for everyone. Such a Conference may seem remote, but the Department of the Environment is appealing to all public and voluntary organisations to contribute to this global discussion, by means of debates, conferences, newspaper articles, projects and in many other ways. In their latest Civic Trust News, the Trust state:-

"Habitat provides an opportunity to debate new questions and old ones which many had thought were settled. In the context of a world short of food and energy, should our settlements become denser so that we can dispense with cars, or should population be dispersed so that more people can grow their vegetables? What should be the relationship between density and size of settlements? Should the population decline of big Western cities continue to be encouraged? Although the ways we use our settlements can change quite rapidly, the settlements themselves do so only slowly and the most that can be done is to influence the direction of change. It is in a global context that we must now look for future directions. The Tindemans Report on European Union speaks of the exhaustion of resources weighing heavily on the future of industrial society, and if as some believe, we are moving into a post industrial society, we may have much to learn from societies that have never become industrial at all".

H3 - West Wycombe Road

Since our last Newsletter, the Bellfield Residents' Association has continued its vigorous campaign to resolve some of the problems connected with the development of the large area of land known as H3, which occupies the prominent slope along the West Wycombe Road. We have received the following account of the recent developments from Ian Stone, the Chairman of the Association:-

"In the last issue of the High Wycombe Society Newsletter, it was reported that, as a result of Bellfield Residents' Association (BRA) action, the Wycombe District Council Housing Services Committee recommended that the existing Plantation Railway Bridge be used as a site access for construction traffic. The Planning Committee accepted this recommendation, and directed its Officers to seek the permission of the County Engineer to enable implementation of the scheme. Unfortunately, the County Engineer was misinformed of the actual situation, both factual and geographical, and consequently refused the application. Councillor Andrew Harris was then briefed by the BRA for a forthcoming Planning Committee meeting, which resulted in the rejection of the County Engineer's refusal. The outcome was the formation of a sub-committee of three members each from the District Council Planning Committee and the County Highways and Transportation Committee to re-examine the situation. As a follow-up, BRA wrote to all members of the County and District Council Planning Committee, and the County Highways and Transportation Committee once again, putting their case for having a permanent safe access off the A.40 before development work commences. At a well attended General Meeting of BRA members on 22nd March 1976, the local feelings were once again re-affirmed, which resulted in a favourable front page report in the Bucks Free Press.

The current Outline Planning permission is about to run out. This has caused the District Council to re-apply, but this time they have:

- (a) left off the conditions imposed by the Department of the Environment on the original application;
- (b) changed the number of units from 500 to an unspecified number.

At the Planning Committee meeting on the 7th April 1976, the above application was renewed with the following amendments which were vigorously introduced by Councillors Mahoney and Harris:

- (a) all conditions on the original application be reinstated;
- (b) no development work shall commence until a site access is made available from the A.40."

The High Wycombe Society has supported the Residents' Association in their efforts to solve the access problem and in the need to ensure that the detailed design and layout conform to high architectural standards, bearing in mind the visual intrusion of the site into the Town.

Gomm Valley

For some time, the attractive Gomm Valley, which is one of the few remaining open areas of the town, has been the subject of much argument and debate. The threat to use the Valley for housing and continue the urban sprawl of Wycombe has receded. In its place, planning permission has been granted to Equity and Law, the owners, to develop the area as a Golf Course. This would have the great merit of keeping the Valley as a much needed green expanse, but we considered its use for agriculture was the best solution. Equity and Law have stated that the planning permission does not necessarily mean that they will provide a Golf Course so possibly it will be used for agricultural purposes, at least for a time.

Repeated Inquiries

In the latest issue of the Civic Trust News occurs an article which will gladden many hearts. Here it is:-

Local amenity societies may face difficulties when repeated application is made for development to which they are opposed, especially if the matter goes successively to public inquiry. There is a danger that a society might not be able to find the resources to fight a second inquiry, so that an important case might not be heard. It is not always satisfactory for a society simply to say its previous objections stand.

Following a case raised by the Cookham Society, the President of the Civic Trust, Lord Duncan-Sandys, discussed this problem with Mr. Gordon Oakes, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Environment. In his reply, Mr. Oakes pointed out that an applicant is not barred from submitting an application identical to one previously refused, even where the situation has not changed. He went on to say:-

"But in such cases the authority will no doubt consider the extent to which it is necessary to re-examine the merits of the application, and may simply reject it outright on the same grounds as before. And where an applicant repeatedly appeals in these circumstances, thereby putting the authority and others to the trouble and expense of appearing at successive inquiries, the Secretary of State is prepared to consider making an award of costs against the developer".

Hugh Osborn

HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP

Toll House

We have little to report. Negotiations between the District Council and the Sports Club continue. In the meantime, the funds, so generously contributed by members and friends, are on deposit with a local bank and will go some way towards the cost of restoration. We hope this will not be too long delayed.

Victorian Buildings

Our display of these in the recent Exhibition created considerable interest, and this has encouraged us to find ways of having some of them placed on the Historic Buildings List. We shall seek the help of the Victorian Society before submitting our list to the Department of the Environment.

No. 5 Easton Street - George and George



"BY GEORGE - IT'S GOOD."

The new 'shop' front at No. 5 Easton Street deserves comment. The original plans for this site were refused because they were not thought good enough for this listed building. As a result, something far better has been achieved - an elegant design and a piece of real craftsmanship. George and George are to be congratulated.

Fly Posting

One appreciates that coming events need to be publicised. The right way to do this is through the Press, by posters tastefully displayed in shops, on proper notice boards in public buildings, and on properly erected and authorised boards in the open. We hope, in due course, the last mentioned will be provided by the Council.

The disfiguration of certain parts of the town by the fly posting of badly designed posters is deplorable. These are hastily pasted on to the top of old posters and the whole display is a torn, untidy mess.

We have been pressing the Council for some time to take action against the principal offenders. Successful action would probably act as a deterrent and bring about a rapid improvement to the general appearance of our town.

Indian Restaurant, Easton Street.

By the time these notes appear, the alteration of Tracey's old grocery shop in Easton Street to an Indian Restaurant will be completed, and the plans indicate that the Restaurant's frontage will be an improvement. It is hoped that the Post Office, who own the two adjoining premises, will bring them up to an equally successful standard. At present, they are shocking.

Jim Cottrell.

Group Meetings.

These continue to be very successful. On Friday, 27th February, Chris Wallis of the Chiltern Society talked to us about the restoration of Lacey Green Windmill. He brought models, strange tools, pictures - and of course, his own tremendous enthusiasm. Apparently, he loves the windmill so much he takes great chunks of it home to work on. We suspect that when restored it will suddenly appear in his back garden, rather than at Lacey Green. It was a fascinating evening enjoyed by everyone. On 26th March, Ivan Sparkes talked about the use of Materials in Local History. Here was another enthusiast infecting all of us with his great interest in local history, and the wealth of information to be found in all kinds of local documents. It was worth going to the meeting just to look at and hold some of the precious original documents.

Please study our programme of coming events and support the events shown.

Jack Scruton.

HERITAGE GROUP

On 19th February the final meeting was held of the U.K. Council, which had been established for Heritage Year. It is clear that the principal aims were achieved during 1975. Local authorities, business interests, local amenity societies and many other organisations carried out hundreds of very successful projects and schemes to enhance Conservation Areas. One astonishing fact was that during the Heritage Year, the number of Conservation Areas increased from just over 2,000 to 4,000. The Education panel set up to encourage Environmental education was very successful and it is to continue its work under the new title of Heritage Education Group. The Civic Trust will administer this work and hope that all amenity Societies will do their utmost to help wherever possible with this form of education.

In High Wycombe the Joint Committee, which included members of the District Council, the Charter Trustees and this Society, made good progress persuading occupiers and owners to carry out improvements in the High Street and Easton Street. With the end of this Committee, the work came to a halt, but it was suggested that the Society might be able to carry on alone. We have now taken the plunge and have formed a Heritage Group. We will have to feel our way for a while, but hope to carry on the good work of the EAHY Joint Committee. We have the moral support of the District Council and the Charter Trustees, the latter having donated £10 to help us pay for postage and printing, and we feel encouraged by this gesture. Any member who would like to join us would be very welcome, as would any ideas for improving any part of the Conservation Area, which stretches from the edge of Frogmoor to Funges Farm in Bassetsbury Lane.

Rita Langton (Mrs)
Hon. Secretary - Heritage Group
23, Highlands, Flackwell Heath.
Tel: Bourne End 21443.

EXHIBITION GROUP

Wycombe Arts Festival Exhibition

The general opinion was that this year's Festival Exhibition was by far the best. There were a number of reasons for this. One was undoubtedly the great response from affiliated local Residents' and other organisations. Their displays were of a high standard and did much to help spread the interest of the Exhibition. Our thanks are also due to many who helped provide material and especially to Krystina Barrow and June Elderfield for the numerous posters, headings and captions. We are also indebted to the loyalty of a large number of Society members who manned the Exhibition so well. We must also acknowledge the generosity of the District Council in providing our magnificent Guildhall and the superb screens free of charge for a fortnight. Lastly - a tribute to our small but very talented Exhibition Group for their hard work under pressure, and for once again just beating the clock!

Ken Latter.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES GROUP

Musical Evening on 3rd April

Over one hundred members and friends spent a pleasant evening in the Parish Rooms listening to the Grove Wind Ensemble, conducted by Ian Farquhar, and the Taverners singers led by Geoffrey Heath. The Wind Ensemble played music by Dvorak and Mozart, while the Taverners sang a variety of delightful songs. The food and wine which followed rounded off another successful occasion. Informal meetings like this are very valuable in bringing members and friends closer together. Although we made a profit, our main aim will always be to provide a pleasant experience. On this occasion, we will share any profit with the musicians in order to help them buy music. Our thanks to all those who helped make the evening a success - especially Christine Clowes, Frances Alexander and Graham Neal.

Eyes down for July 10th

Many of our members remember our very successful Musical evening and outdoor dancing held last July. We have been asked repeatedly if another evening with the New Crusaders Steel Band could be arranged. The answer is YES! They will play at Burleighfield House, the home of our President Patrick Reyntiens, on Saturday 10th July, admission by ticket only. There will be dancing out of doors, and of course, our usual attractive supper. We haven't worked out the final details, but we do know that tickets will be £2 each inclusive. More expensive than last year - but of course, the cost of the band, hiring charges and food have all risen. For such an evening the price is reasonable. We will require to know as soon as possible how much support we can count on, so please contact Mrs. C. Clowes, Eyot House, Bassetsbury Mill, Bassetsbury Lane, High Wycombe (Tel: H.W. 30694) if you would like tickets. Your friends would be very welcome.



WATER GROUP

On 2nd March, old and new members of the Water Group met to plan their Spring activities, starting with a river clearance along the Rye from Pann Mill to Rye Mill Garage. Thirty sacks of rubbish were collected on a beautiful Spring morning and our activities excited quite a bit of interest from passers by. Our thanks must go to the two girls from Wesley Guides who did such a thorough job so cheerfully.

On Saturday, 1st May, we are doing a walk-about, looking at the River Wye from Bassetsbury Lane to Loudwater. We are meeting at Marsh Green Mill in Bassetsbury Lane at 2.30pm, and would welcome members and their families. The next item to be arranged for the Water Group is a talk on the Natural history of our river.

New members are particularly welcome to this recently reformed group. Please give me a ring if you are interested. Our next arranged meeting is on Thursday, 6th May - 8.00 pm, at Marsh Green Mill.

Sheila Latimer.

Tel: High Wycombe 30389.

PROGRAMME OF COMING EVENTS

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

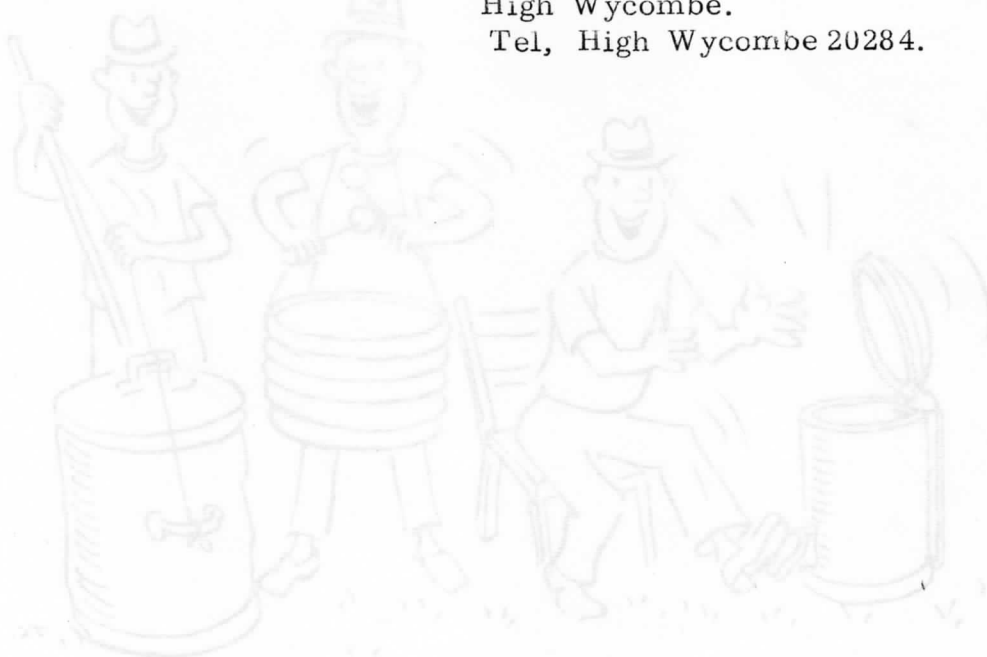
Saturday. 8th May

Canal trip on the Kennet-Avon Canal. This has been arranged by Derek Woods and is certain to be worthwhile. This very beautiful stretch of canal is made more attractive by the fact that the barge will be horsedrawn.

Coach will leave High Wycombe (Stewart and Arnold's factory) at 10.00am. Inclusive cost approx £2.00. Members interested should contact Derek at;

19. Adelaide Road,
High Wycombe.

Tel, High Wycombe 20284.



Saturday, 1st May

A walk down the River Wye. Meet at Marsh Green Mill, Bassetsbury Lane at 2.30pm.



"I KNOW THE NEWSLETTER SAID 'A WALK DOWN THE RIVER WYE,' BUT -"

Sunday, 2nd May

Walk in Keep Hill Woods. Meet at Swimming Pool on the Rye at 2.00pm - take picnic tea.

Sunday, 23rd May

Day trip to Wisley R.H.S. Gardens by car. Those interested contact Mrs. Rippington (High Wycombe 26616).

Friday, 28th May

At No. 1 Hampden Road, the home of Lorna Cassidy. Lorna will talk about High Wycombe as seen by the Artist, and will show some of her work and methods. Please note the change of venue.

Sunday, 5th June

Visit to Bulstrode Park (near Gerrard's Cross) with Chiltern Society. Superb trees and grounds highly recommended. Meet at entrance gates at 10.00am.

Wednesday, 30th June

A Walk round Old Amersham, led by members of the Amersham Society using the fascinating trail devised by them. If you are interested, please contact Walter Newall at 2 Plomer Hill. A number of members have already indicated that they wish to take part.



"and behind me is Amersham's fine old church - rather marred by Victorianisation."

Wednesday, 7th July

Quarterly Meeting at 7.30 pm in the Guildhall. William Mitchell, the well known architect, will speak on a subject of his own choice. Amusing and provocative.

Saturday, 10th July

At Burleighfield House, Loudwater. Dancing to the New Crusaders Steel Band - supper. See separate notice.

July or August

Derek Woods is trying to arrange a coach trip to the lovely Hatfield House. He has some names, but needs more to fill a coach. The House and grounds are well worth a visit. If you are interested, write to Derek at 19 Adelaide Road or telephone High Wycombe 20284.

Friday, 24th September

Stuart King will talk about The History of the the Windsor Chair and show his models. 7.30pm in the Friends Meeting House, at 25 London Road.

Friday, 8th October

Quarterly meeting at 7.30 pm in the Guildhall. Elliot Viney, Hon. Secretary of the Bucks Archaeological Society will speak about current archaeological problems.