

~~High Wycombe~~ High Wycombe.



# High Wycombe Society

HON.

SECRETARY: J SCRUTON 17 LONDON ROAD HIGH WYCOMBE BUCKS

Telephone 25933

NEWSLETTER No. 34.

SPRING 1978

## FESTIVAL EXHIBITION

This was held in the Guildhall from 20 March to 1 April by kind permission of the District Council and the Festival Committee, and received much favourable comment. We tried to show a balanced picture of our Treasures and Eyesores, and our own efforts were supplemented by lively entries from local schools and Residents' Associations. The Exhibition draw attention to the Chiltern Society's project, which is seeking to discover treasures and eyesores throughout the Chilterns, and to follow up with positive action to improve or remove the eyesores.

We are indebted to many people who supplied material, or helped to put it all together, or who manned the Exhibition so loyally. We would like to pay a special tribute to Martin Kipping for his prodigious efforts in providing so many photographs within a strict time limit, and to Krystina Barrow for once more writing and illustrating so many beautiful posters and headings in her inimitable script. A veritable treasure indeed!



" I CAN'T SEE ANY EYE-SORES HERE. "

## PLANNING GROUP

### High Street - Closure to through vehicles

Eric Alexander, one of our members, has taken a keen interest in this problem and the following extracts from his files illustrate the frustrating nature of the exercise. However, we have just had a letter from the District Council stating that our latest views were made known to the Council's Planning Policy Committee, and that a report will be made to this Committee at their next meeting, outlining traffic restrictions which could be introduced in the Town Centre prior to the completion of substantial highway improvement schemes. We hope that the Committee will agree to implement some form of traffic restriction, even if of a limited nature. It might pave the way for a full scheme in the not too distant future.

"... Your committee have approved these proposals and the Ministry of Transport is being requested to make the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders ..." (Minutes of High Wycombe Borough Council Public Works Committee, 20 April 1971)

"... Your committee have now been formally invited to apply for de-trunking of the A40 from Pann Mill to Oxford Roundabout. If this application is successful, this will enable the Council's proposal to stop up the High Street at the Guildhall to be introduced ..." (Minutes of High Wycombe Borough Council Public Works Committee, 12 June 1973)

"We wish to see immediately the adoption of pedestrian precincts in parts of High Street, Church Street and White Hart Street." (From; summary of High Wycombe Society's comments on Wycombe Area Transportation Study, Autumn 1975 Newsletter)

"... A working group of officers of both the District and County Councils had been set up to produce schemes acceptable to both Authorities. It was this Group's report that was now submitted ... Resolved that a joint panel of members of this committee and of the County Council be appointed to consider the Group's report and report back to the two councils ..." (Minutes of Wycombe District Council Planning (Policy) Committee, 16th June 1976)

"... The Joint Panel ... had met ... decided to adopt the scheme ... prior consultations should take place with interested parties ... Exhibition at the Guildhall ... a view to the scheme being implemented early in 1977." (Minutes of Wycombe District Council Planning (Policy) Committee, 18th October 1976)

"... With regard to the proposed restrictions on traffic using the High Wycombe High Street, doubt had been raised as to whether this was premature as it was felt that priority should be given to easing the traffic flow on the main approach roads to the town centre ... high priority ... 1978/79 programme ... improvement of the Amersham Hill/Totteridge Road junction railway bridge ... eight alternative

improvement schemes for the A40/404 junction ... detailed consideration of other possibilities ... would need to await the outcome of these road improvements" (Minutes of Wycombe District Council Planning (Policy) Committee, 30th November 1977)

"... This leaves us little prospect that the closure could take place in 1981/82 ... We believe that this delay is both unnecessary and undesirable ... The Council has already worked out the details of a temporary scheme ... We ask the Council to stop dithering and to implement it this year." (Letter from Jack Scruton, on behalf of the Society, to Ken Richards, District Council Technical Services Officer, 12 January 1978)

"... The present view is that there should be improvements on routes accommodating traffic diverted from the High Street before the proposed scheme is implemented ... " (Letter from Ken Richards to Jack Scruton, 18 January 1978)

"... Volunteers from Wycombe Division Liberal Association ... took a random opinion poll in High Wycombe High Street ... Out of 150 interviewed, 130 were for closure of the High Street ... But ... many felt it unlikely the local council would actually do anything." (Bucks Free Press "People and Places", 12 February 1978)

### New Shopping Centre

The District Council, in partnership with Tesco, is hoping to establish a Superstore in the town centre at Newland, in place of the old buildings near the Octagon Bus Station. A planning application has been submitted, accompanied by a detailed statement, for consideration by the Councillors of both District and County.

In view of the great impact this would have upon the town centre, trading enterprises, and traffic problems, we have asked the Chief Executive to arrange proper public discussion of the proposals. We have also suggested that Tesco should provide a model in view of the complexity of the scheme.



"Beautiful model isn't it? Down to the last window sticker!"

### New Shopping Centre (contd)

It would be of interest to hear the views of our members and Affiliated Societies concerning the proposals.

### Green Farm and Green Hill - H. 6

Jeanes Developments are again seeking the development of Green Farm and Green Hill and it is essential that all concerned should prepare themselves for another battle. This attempted intrusion into the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty must be resisted at all costs. This beautiful piece of countryside overlooks the Hughenden Valley and can be seen from many parts of Wycombe. To allow housing would not only seriously mutilate the land in question: it would threaten also the very fine Green Hill woods which form the backcloth.

Our countryside is being eaten away at an alarming rate - equivalent to the size of Bedfordshire every four years! It is ironic that we have throughout the country 250,000 acres of derelict land, sufficient for 5 million houses. In our town centre, we have land suitable for houses. There is every reason, therefore, to oppose the applications and to press our views with the utmost vigour.

### Urban Wasteland

The Civic Trust has recently issued a devastating report about the vast amount of land in our towns and cities which is now lying idle, and which presents a most dismal sight throughout the land. The report was prepared by Timothy Cantell, who spoke at our last A. G. M., and he was helped by 249 local Societies, including the High Wycombe Society. The tragic situation revealed has roused the Minister of the Environment and it is hoped that swift action will be taken to bring about a drastic improvement. It is ironice that builders everywhere are complaining of a 'land famine' while valuable farmland is disappearing at an ever-increasing rate. We hope that District Council officers and councillors will find the time to study this timely report.

### NEWS FROM THE CIVIC TRUST

#### Noise in Brussels

High environmental standards are not pursued as a first objective of EEC policy. Rather, they are an afterthought - some kind of 'compensation' that can be wrung from vehicle manufacturers in exchange for the economic advantages conferred on them by the common market. This hard-nosed view of environmental policy may or may not be imposed by the Treaty of Rome but we environmentalists must take the measure of it. If we agree, we must drive the best bargain we can. If we do not, then there is some hard work ahead changing the rules.

The point is where we best apply our pressure. There are some people who still fondly believe that there is purpose in persuading the British Government to promote, and Parliament to enact, tough new laws on vehicle noise. This is pointless.



### Noise in Brussels (contd)

Westminster can reduce the noise limits below the EEC limits to be sure, but all a manufacturer has to do is obtain EEC-type approval that his vehicle complies with EEC limits and he cannot be prevented from selling his vehicle in Britain.

In the field of vehicle noise, as in many others, the EEC moves majestically at the pace of its slowest members. And if it so happens that lorry manufacturers in, say France, are not confronted as they are in Britain by people demanding that they quieten their vehicles - for the very good reason that in France nothing like as many goods move by road as in the UK - it is no good people complaining in London. Brussels is the place - and Paris too.

### Planning Control not to be relaxed

Following a defeat for the Government in the House of Lords on a motion moved by the Civic Trust's President, Lord Duncan-Sandys, measures to relax planning control have been withdrawn 'for further consideration'.

An amendment to the General Development Order had been laid before Parliament in November and was due to take effect on 1 January but the Department of the Environment back-pedalled two days before the Christmas recess after resistance became clear in both Houses. The changes would have allowed greater scope for the enlargement of houses and factories as permitted development (i. e. without application for planning permission) and the conversion of a house into two flats would have become a new class of permitted development. In 1976, the DoE issued a consultation paper suggesting a series of relaxations in detailed planning control and this was opposed by, among others, the Civic Trust and ourselves.

### New Government advice on layout of roads in housing estates

A dispiriting feature of many modern housing estates in their monotonous and unimaginative lay-out, with long straight vistas of concrete punctuated only by the odd right-angle road junction which (when you reach it) leads to another vista of the same dreary kind. There can hardly be a local amenity society in the country which has not complained about this problem but so far the complaints have been to little avail. The reason? The developers, public or private, plead that they have to satisfy the highway engineer; and the engineer explains that he has to go by the book - in this case the advice given by Government in such manuals as Roads in Urban Areas.

However, the protests have not been in vain. As foreshadowed in Civic Trust News in September 1976, the Department of the Environment has issued new advice much more in sympathy with current thinking on the subject.

The emphasis is now on a much more flexible approach and less formal road-patterns. This is not simply for aesthetic reasons. There is one very good practical reason for abandoning the old-fashioned 'set-square' approach. Long, straight stretches of road encourage what actually needs discouraging in residential areas - high speed. It is a measure of the changed climate of

... layout of roads in housing estates (contd)

opinion that the Department can be quite blunt about this. 'A design speed of 30 mph is unlikely to be justified for residential roads simply on grounds of convenience or journey time. Lower speeds would often enable visibility splays to be reduced, thereby permitting more economic use of land and increasing the scope to create more attractive and safer surroundings'. Societies which have been saying just this for the past 10 years will be cheered to know that their views have not, after all, fallen on deaf ears. The Department has also taken to hear the Trust's point that good segregated pedestrian routes are a desirable feature of large housing developments.

(Note by High Wycombe Society)

But what about implementation? Just look up at H3. The roads may have a design speed of 30mph but with the long, straight stretches they will encourage something like 50mph. We also note that the District Council has approved its own application to divert a path (No. 22) across H3 taking positive steps to bring pedestrian and vehicular transport together!)

HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP

Rosemary Shooter  
High Wycombe 26964

Widmer Farm

Margot Baker has restored the derelict buildings of Widmer Farm, transforming them into three delectable dwellings, choosing the barn as her new home. Here she tells the story of what was, quite literally .... A DREAM COME TRUE

Three times, years ago, I had a dream, always the same dream. I was standing at the end of a long, straight, tree-lined drive, looking at a beautiful Georgian farmhouse with dormer windows. Farm buildings surrounded a courtyard, and, in my dream, I knew that I had found my ideal.

Now I have made that ideal become reality because, in less than a year, I have restored the run-down Widmer Farm buildings to their former glory, turning the barn into my "dream-house", and the farm house and stables into two properties which I hope will equally realise the ambitions of their new owners.

The only features missing from my visionary picture are the trees, but the strange thing is that they did exist. A beautiful row of oaks was cut down and sold years ago ...

It was always beautiful weather in my dream, but on the day that I finally knew that I could buy the farm, hail was pouring off its battered roof like, as my husband says, "Sugar off a shovel."

A morass of mud, deepening in a daily downpour of rain was usually the first obstacle to be overcome by the magnificent team of workmen I gathered round me in the first few months, but I soon found that Aylesbury men are not to be put off by such trifles. One day, when the rain was

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Widmer Farm (contd)

coming down like stair-rods, Martin and I approached the farm with fear, trepidation - and hot soup - to find not smoke, I sear, but steam billowing from every orifice - and there were plenty in the building in those days, for it had been left to decay for 12 years. There was the gallant crew, ship-shape and warm as toast in the little parlour, enjoying a well-earned cup of tea in front of a roaring wood fire. Like all men on active service, they had made their billet as comfortable as possible.

I must confess, though, that the dozen of us who subsequently crowded into that tiny, ten feet by nine space for brief spasms of warmth and rest would not have been so merry if we had known what I found out later. I told the "chippies" to make sure that the floor was removed as it was in such a decayed state. With no more ado, one of them pushed a handy scaffold pole into the floor joist, To his horror - and mine - the wood crumbled into a heap of dust. The main floor carrier was riddled with death-watch beetle, and, when cut, fell into pieces of a peat-like substance no bigger than my little finger. How we all escaped falling twenty feet down through the floor into the Victorian cellar I will never know.



*"It pays to throw a shovelful at Mrs. Baker occasionally, so she'll think we don't watch out for her."*

Thank goodness the floorings had obviously come from a separate batch of wood, because after clearing the surfaces of the structure's main beams we found oak as hard as iron which had blunted and bent many a nail. The brick and flint part of the building, too, was as sound as a bell.

You may have been puzzled by my reference to Victorian cellars after describing the farm as Georgian. The fact is that cellars in old buildings were often added after the main construction. The owners mined beneath the property in order to provide themselves with - in effect - an early, and roomy, version of the modern refrigerator.

Widmer Farm (contd)

As we stripped the farm and its buildings, we found many structural alterations had been made during the centuries. There were, for instance, at least two sets of stair "trimmers" (where floor joists had been cut) in the farmhouse, leading to the surmise that the farmer's son married, moved in with his parents, and then persuaded them to turn the building into two cottages with separate staircases.

My team and I began to feel part of an age-old succession as we found, for example, traces of windows which had once been small and square, turned into large, vertical features, and signs that the room in the farm, which is now the dining room, indicated, in ways too subtle to explain here, of being easily the oldest part of the house. Now we, too, were making our mark in ways which would no doubt be judged by future generations.

It was remarkable how close we got to the ghosts of the craftsmen who had laboured two or three hundred years before us. "Look how he's made this!" a carpenter would say of a piece of traditional workmanship. "He must have worked hard on that joint; probably took him all day."

A modern engineer with all the latest apparatus was given the task of altering some door hinges for the barn which had been taken from the farmhouse. They were as big as swords. "Look how he's feathered them out, curled them round, chamfered the edges", he exclaimed. "You can see the hammer blows!" This technological expert with his oxy-acetylene and white boiler suit was talking of a 300-year dead "contemporary" in a fringed apron!

The sense of tradition on the site was accompanied by the sound of laughter - much, but by no means all - inspired by the eccentricities of the Electricity Board, Water Board and various other aspects of Bumbledom which seem inseparable from any enterprise like the one on which I have been engaged.

We'll skip the tale of the huge team of men who turned up with a monstrous digger for the telephone authorities, proceeded solemnly to scratch a tiny hole three feet long and two feet deep, and then departed, leaving the cables sticking out of the ground. (They had previously dug a hole at the wrong farm, much to the chagrin of one of our neighbours.)

We'll overlook, too, the representative of another authority who proudly announced, "I'm a surveyor!" - but who failed to realise that he had got his plans upside down.

But I must tell you about the little official from the GPO who came to install the telephone. He walked about the site looking in the air all the time. "I can't put your phone on", he finally announced. You haven't got a pole."



### Widmer Farm (contd)

"We know", said Martin and I. "The cables are - at long last, by grace and favour of your colleagues, underground."

"Well, they're not on my ticket, he replied. I'll have to consult Head Office. Can I use your phone?" Our plumber, who overheard this, rolled on the floor, helpless with laughter, tears streaming down his cheeks.



The repartee from my own team gave me many a chuckle. One story must suffice. One day, the plasterer lavished his art on disguising a vent hole; by building a mock oak beam so real that people now go around, tapping, touching and stroking first wood and then its imitation and asking which is which. When I was, at last, allowed to see his masterpiece (the men blocked off the area with wheelbarrows until he was finished, so that it would be a special surprise for me) I was astounded. "Oh, don't think anything of it", said one of his mates, "when he gets bored at home he goes out and plasters the ferret hutch!"

The craftsmanship which has recently gone into Widmer Farm, "Piranor", as the barn is now called (after the "lost" 12th-century village nearby) and "Bramble Barn", as the stables are to be named, proves that local pride in traditional values is a deep well from which many a draught will yet be drawn.

I am proud to have brought the old glory back to Widmer Farm, and only wish that all the anonymous men who laid the foundations could be honoured - and I mean that literally, because although we sometimes praise the carpenter, the bricklayer, the plasterer, we often forget the equally skillful man who dug the footings.

The other day, an eminent architect looked at the farmhouse and said, "I see that you didn't have to touch the roof then". Little did he know that it contains fifteen thousand fresh tiles, placed there with great artistry by modern workmen, and that he had inadvertently paid me - and them - the greatest possible compliment.

### The Toll House and the Fund

Those who walk or motor by the Cricket Ground might think the old Toll House is no more, but that is not the case, for it has been demolished, brick by brick and timber by timber, and all usable materials are being stored for eventual re-erection in the proposed Museum of Bucks Buildings at Newland Park, Chalfont St. Giles. The re-created Toll House will be a great attraction.

As members will know, we fought for a long time for its restoration in situ but the money available from various sources was never quite enough.

One of the sources of money was our Save the Toll House Fund. Exactly 100 individuals and firms contributed a total of £555.60 which, with accrued interest, became £714.00. With the demolition of the building, disposal of the funds was necessary and it was felt that donors should have a choice as to what should happen to their gifts. A letter was therefore sent to everyone giving them the following alternatives:

- (a) The gift to be returned to them (nine asked for this to be done)
- (b) The gift to be re-allocated to the Chiltern Open Air Museum to help with the rebuilding of the Toll House (nine asked for this to be done)
- (c) The gift to be passed on to the Rye Protection Society who were suddenly faced with a debt of some £450. Readers will remember that this affiliated society failed in their worthy efforts to have the Rye designated as a "Town Green". The struggle cost the Society £450 in legal fees (18 asked for this to be done)
- (d) The gift to be shared between the two causes. This could be achieved by donors requesting this action or simply by failing to reply to our letter (64 donors fall into these groups)

The High Wycombe Society is a registered charity and the above findings have been referred to the Charity Commissioners to await their decision. This and the final figures will be reported in a later Newsletter.

Jim Cottrell

### Holmer's Farm, Cressex

Many of you will probably be familiar with this farm, especially after the excellent photographs in the Cressex Residents' Association contribution to the latest Exhibition. The farm is now under offer and the District Council hope to complete the sale as quickly as possible. The farm and barns will be used as private dwellings. This will be a great relief to the Council, the Residents' Association, and to this Society, as the buildings, which are listed, have been the target of vandals for some time and much damage has been caused.

Janet Tully

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## Historic Buildings Group Meetings

### ( i ) Widmer Farm

On Thursday, 23 March, at the Friends' Meeting House, Mrs Baker, accompanied by her husband, gave a most interesting talk about the restoration of Widmer Farm. This farmhouse and barns are listed buildings, and since the owners were refused permission to develop the surrounding farmland, they had been left to decay. Mrs Baker persuaded Laings to sell the farm to her and she started on an eleven-month restoration campaign. The result is magnificent. The farmhouse stands resplendent once again with glass, instead of boards, in the windows. But the barns deserve the highest praise. The roofs retiled, dwarf brick and flint walls rebuilt, timber cladding repaired and weather-proofed. Inside the barns have been transformed into comfortable, beautiful homes of character. Exposed beams and rafters are set off by the white-painted walls. The difficulty in putting in a staircase was solved by making a gallery and putting in two shorter staircases instead. In one room, the oldest rafter does duty as a bed-head!

Mrs Baker brought along photographs before and after the work was done and also an album of photographs showing the work in progress. We are very fortunate in having a person like Mrs Baker among us, and could do with many more people of her determination in the Society.

### (ii) A Visit to Nigeria

On Friday, 17 January, at the Friends' Meeting House, Mr Jim Cottrell gave a most interesting talk, with slides, on his visit to Nigeria. Most of his visit was centred at Zaria in the north of the country. Many of the dwellings are built of mud baked dry and it came as a surprise to the audience to find that they do not disintegrate during the rainy season! Channels are dug at the side of the roads to cope with the rain.

Janet Tully

## TREES GROUP

We are glad to have placed another tree on Frogmoor this Spring which, with the replacement for one that died last year, makes a pleasing group of three - two Limes and a Plane. In order to survive, they need regular watering in dry periods. Members who would like to help are asked to get in touch with me. The trees planted by the schoolchildren last year are becoming established now, and those at Pheasant Drive have been added to by the District Council, with a large planting of Beech, thus covering the triangular green there in a fine show.

"Clean up the Chilterns Week" took place this year during 19-26 March, and the Trees Group, with local schoolchildren, cleared up part of Highfield Wood, Micklefield. This wood, hemmed in by Council Estates, is the worst wood in Wycombe for rubbish and needs another onslaught in the Autumn. More in the next Newsletter and we hope for more help then.

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### TREES GROUP (contd)

This leads me to our dire situation. The Trees Group has organised two talks in the past year - one by Martin Ward, District Arboriculturalist, last Autumn (attended by an audience of eleven) and one by Mr Sale, District Officer of the Forestry Commission, in February (attended by an audience of three - so the event was scratched although Mr Sale had come fully prepared).

The Trees Group has sadly diminished in numbers due to members leaving the district or having babies(!), and is now very small indeed. Any effort we make has to be preceded by dozens of phone calls to gain support, only a few of which receive a positive response. This is expensive in time and money and disheartening. If you want a Trees Group in the Society we must have more support, and more members willing to join us. We take part in many other activities of the Society too. If every member gave one hour a month, we should have 450 hours of work - far more than we receive now in six months.

So the next person I telephone may be you! Don't say "no" - say "next week", "next month" or "next time" and give a date. I will be in touch!

Barbara Rippington  
High Wycombe 26616

### WATER GROUP

#### Pann Mill

Wycombe District Council having provided planks for the sluice gate to divert the river past the water wheel, members of the Water Group, and quite an audience of interested bystanders, gathered at Pann Mill one Sunday morning in early January. There was an air of excitement as the sluice gate planks were dropped in and the water built up in the millstream.

The water wheel seemed reluctant to rouse itself at first, but a few shoulders - literally to the wheel! - stirred it into action and it dramatically made its first few slow revolutions before building up to quite an impressive speed. The water supply was ample, it was a delightful sight, and the sound was music in the ears of all those whose determination achieved this happy result. Our sincere thanks go to the representative of Wycombe District Council, who has done so much to enable the Water Group to get this project underway - and whose personal enthusiasm extended to struggling thigh-deep in icy water to get the sluice planks out again, against the flow of water, and stop the wheel revolving.

There are one or two repairs to be made and safeguards to be considered before we can begin giving demonstrations to visitors to the Rye at weekends, but these are in hand. Our future aim must be to work towards a more suitable housing for the machinery and its eventual restoration.

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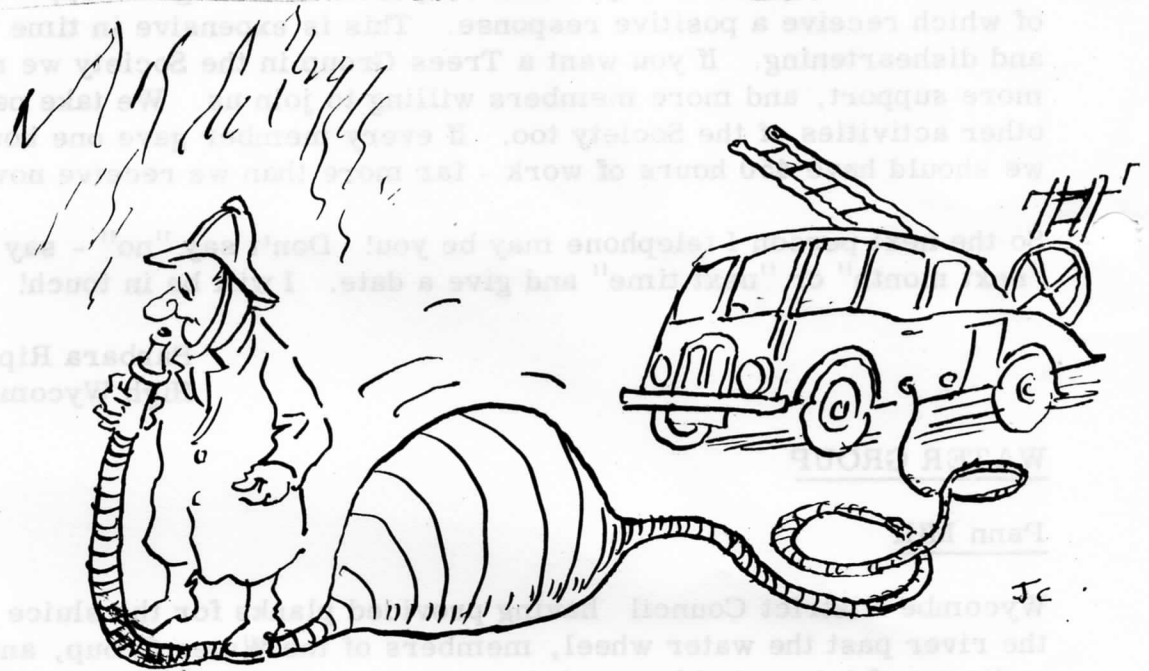
## WATER GROUP (contd)

### Walkabouts

Two walkabouts were arranged to examine and enjoy the river. The first was Sunday, 2 April, the second on Sunday, 23 April. Those who joined us were surprised at what they saw.

### Film Show

We are having a film show under the title of "WATER", to be held on Thurs, 18 May, at the Friends Meeting House at 8.00pm. This promises to be a very interesting with lots of surprises - from water wheels to firemen. So do come along and bring friends and neighbours.



WATERY SURPRISE COMING

### River Clearances

We hope to arrange a series of these now that the walkabouts have highlighted those areas most needing our attention. If you would like to join us in river clearing, do let me know and I will be in touch later in the season.

Sheila Latimer  
High Wycombe 30389

## HERITAGE GROUP

### Curry Restaurant Project

Our plan to improve an Eyesore at the Curry Restaurant site in Easton Street has now got off the ground. Aided by a grant from the County Jubilee Fund, the Venture Scouts, under the able leadership of George Harper, have begun the painting of the Restaurant Wall and hope to continue soon. They have also cleared the rough site by the wall and have unearthed some pleasant setts.

The District Council has now joined in by planting mini shrubs on the cleared site.

The Scouts also cleared the unpleasant broken tarmac surface in the adjoining passageway, and the High Wycombe Society is now re-laying the setts. It should be attractive when finished.

In these tasks the Society is being helped by an enthusiastic band of Young Conservatives and we are anxious to further increase our Task Force to tackle this and other projects.

THE PROPRIETOR, AN  
INDIAN GENTLEMAN, IS  
GIVING THE PROJECT  
HIS SUPPORT.

The work is enjoyable and is no more than two hours on a Saturday or Sunday morning. Anyone interested, please phone -

Barbara Rippington  
High Wycombe 26616.



"Careful with your pick, Ted."



## QUARTERLY MEETING

On Wednesday, 25th January, the Guildhall was filled to hear Miss Hermione Hobhouse, the Secretary of the Victorian Society. She spoke about the work of this National Society and showed some superb slides.

Miss Hobhouse gave a most interesting account of the origins and work of the Society. She explained that the protection of old buildings started with the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877 by William Morris, who was outraged by the "insensitive and improper" alterations being done to old buildings by contemporary architects. As she said, it seems an irony that it is the work of those architects that now needs protection from the unsympathetic attentions of today's architects and developers!

The Victorian Society was formed in 1958 as a result of mounting concern at the great loss of Victorian buildings during the post-war building boom. One of their earliest cases, which proved to be a popular if unsuccessful objection, was the unfortunate demolition of Euston Station Arch to make way for a part of the new station. From small beginnings, the Society has grown to become a National Society of several thousand members with organised local groups in many parts of the country. Its responsible attitude to case work has earned it the respect of the Department of the Environment and its opinion is sought by that Department on matters concerning Victorian buildings.

We were shown slides of buildings that had been under threat of demolition and for which there was a concern for preservation. The scope of the case work varied from buildings of national importance, such as the Foreign Office and Tower Bridge, through major buildings like St. Pancras Station Hotel, Scotland Yard and Mentmore Towers, to small but unique town houses. In all cases, the difficulties resulting from retention were recognised, particularly when it involved a change from the original use of the building. Some cases had regrettably been lost but, due to the Society's efforts, many were now protected against demolition and had been sensitively modernised to become valuable and useful buildings once more.

The evening ended with a number of questions from the audience which showed much local interest in the subject of Miss Hobhouse's talk.

We had on show at the meeting a small exhibition of photographs illustrating local Victorian architecture of note.

Mike Hammett

## PROGRAMME OF COMING EVENTS

The following programme has been arranged, so please make a note of the dates in your diary. We hope that as many as possible will support these events, including members from Residents' Associations and Affiliated Societies.

Ron Sims

## PROGRAMME

Thursday, 27th  
April, 1978

Annual General Meeting of the Society at  
7.45pm in the Guildhall.

Illustrated talk by George Perkin, ARIBA,  
on Building in Harmony

Thursday, 18th  
May, 1978

Films about watery subjects, including  
Water Mills.

Friends' Meeting House, 25 London Road,  
High Wycombe. 8.00pm.

Friday, 16th  
June, 1978

Walkabout in Old Beaconsfield led by John  
Broadbent, ARIBA A. A. Dip (Hons.)

Meet 7.30pm on Lord's Waste, outside the  
Police Station in Windsor End, Beaconsfield

Wednesday, 12  
July, 1978

Quarterly Meeting in the Guildhall at 7.45pm.  
Illustrated talk by Mrs M. Dance, MBE,  
Secretary of the Society for the Protection  
of Ancient Buildings, on the work of her  
Society.

Friday, 29th  
September, 1978

Illustrated talk by Miss M. Dodds at 7.45pm,  
in the Friends' Meeting House, on -

A Journey to South America, including the  
Cities of the Incas

Friday, 19th  
January, 1979

BARN DANCE  
Townfield House, Totteridge Road.  
8.00pm-midnight. Admission £1  
Refreshments available to purchase

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