



# High Wycombe Society

HON.

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

NEWSLETTER No.41

SUMMER 1980

## OPTION 2

1.NO

2.NO

3.NO

4.NO

OPTION 1

OPTION 3

OPTION 4

Planning Group

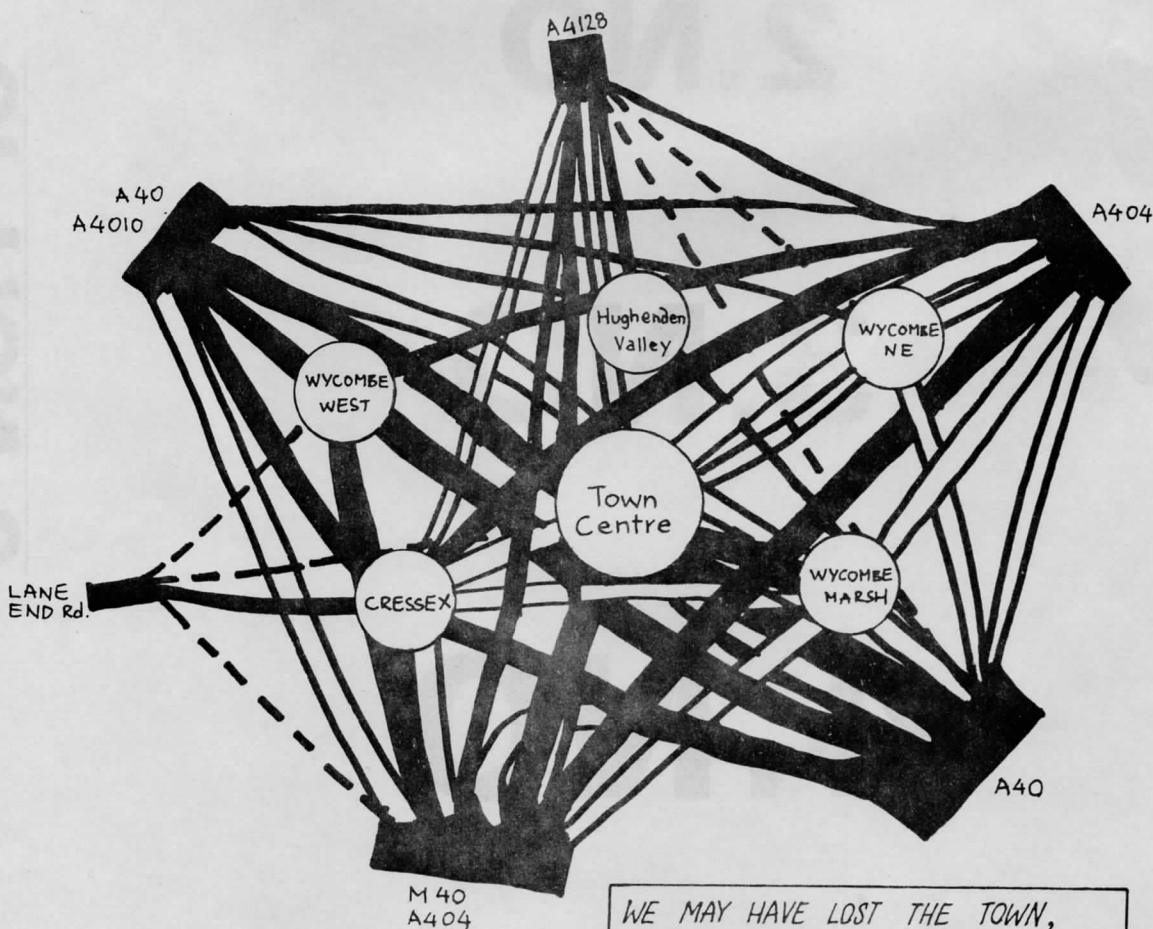
ROADS, ROADS, AND MORE ROADS.

Wycombe Area District Plan Policy Document No 7 -  
Transportation

We have studied the recent document and large scale maps on possible road plans to be carried out in High Wycombe and District, and your Executive Committee has decided to oppose all the four options suggested in the document. We feel most strongly that the proposals are far beyond the requirements of Wycombe and District and would mutilate the town and countryside, quite apart from inflicting misery upon a considerable number of people.

Undoubtedly we have our traffic problems, as have most towns, but we need better solutions in all parts of the town, rather than massive and very expensive road works. We think the document should be withdrawn and the exercise started again, with the people of Wycombe and District involved from the beginning.

Ted Kearney,  
Chairman



WE MAY HAVE LOST THE TOWN,  
BUT WE'VE LOTS OF LOVELY ROADS!

### Public Inquiry - Amersham Hill Flats

On 3rd/4th June a Public Inquiry was held concerning an application by developers to build 53 flats on land at 53-55 Amersham Hill. This is an attractive and very prominent part of the hill, with fine trees "protected" by Tree Preservation Orders. To build 53 flats could have a disastrous effect. To squeeze them in would be a serious over development and the appearance of the large and rather grim blocks would be completely out of scale. A miniature Colditz would be seen from many parts. Trees would disappear and there would be a serious traffic problem in Malmesbury Road. We supported the District Council in their opposition. It was most encouraging to see that Councillor Kathleen Peatey attended the Inquiry on behalf of her ward and the Society, and spoke very firmly against the proposals.

Rosemary Shooter

### Heavy Lorries

We have always been very concerned about the growing impact on our environment of heavy lorries and our members may be interested in the following extract from the C.P.R.E. Headquarters Bulletin concerning this problem:

"The EEC persist in pressing for a harmonised maximum lorry weight of either 40 or 44 tonnes. CPRE persists in its objections. The Government has set up an inquiry by Sir Arthur Armitage into the growth in the movement of freight by road and, in particular, the impact of the lorry on people and the environment. We submitted evidence calling attention to the fact that of 207,000 miles of road in the UK approximately 170,000 miles are generally unsuited to use by heavy lorries. We deplore the present policy whereby the road classification system brings with it few restrictions on usage of even the most inappropriate roads by the heaviest vehicles and no restrictions at all on access. This is a major cause of the intense public feeling against these vehicles. It would be naive to pretend that we could do without either lorries or a modicum of road construction, but, as it would be environmentally, financially and socially unacceptable to improve even a substantial percentage of our road system to a standard capable of carrying the heaviest vehicles, other solutions must be found. We believe the problem could be substantially mitigated by a package of measures which would include greater use of mandatory routing, the introduction of smaller lorries picking up sealed demountable containers brought by heavy vehicles to distribution centres, a change in both Government and British Rail policy towards wagon load traffic and more positive planning of the siting of developments which generate heavy traffic.

In our evidence to Sir Arthur we firmly stated that, until the UK has solved its present problems caused by heavy vehicles of up to 32 tonnes there can be no question of an increase to 40 or 44 tonnes. Road transport methods are constantly evolving to suit industry and the retailer but with little thought to the social and environmental damage they cause".

Ian Stone.

Conference held at Royal Society of Arts on Wednesday 18th June on  
Subject of Urban Wastelands

A Conference was held on Wednesday 18th June at the Royal Society of Arts in London, to deal with the problems of Urban Wastelands. A panel of distinguished speakers representing many interests was matched by a lively and deeply interested audience determined to thrash out this complicated national problem.

It was pointed out that there are two kinds of desert - derelict land, which is not usable without the spending of vast sums because of pollution or other forms of degradation, and land which is usable if ways can be found to overcome various and sometimes mysterious constraints.

The Government has spent large sums to bring some derelict sites into some form or use, but much remains to be done. As for the usable sites, there was a general feeling that a collective will should be developed to overcome all the obstacles, which are sometimes considerable. Many local authorities are prevented from using or disposing of vacant sites because of financial problems, such as loss of subsidies and other strange anomalies. Some developers would like to bring back the bulldozer to enlarge vacant sites to enable them to create large, comprehensive schemes, but many present including local authority representatives were against this and felt that profitable and attractive schemes could be carried out on small sites. A good example of this is the small scale building now being carried out in our own Western Desert.

The conclusion of the Conference was that unused land must be brought into use as soon as possible. It was felt that too many local authorities and private organisations thought only in terms of buildings, and the many other suitable uses have escaped their attention. More and more enlightened authorities have allowed "temporary" uses for such things as adventure playgrounds, allotments, gardens, urban farms and even zoos. It seems that projects like these have proved worthwhile because temporary use can sometimes last for years. As an example the High Wycombe Society made a garden in Paul's Row with Council permission, but we were warned that it might be for a short time as the site was to be developed. That was five years ago and the garden is still there, and has made a pleasant contribution to that part of the Conservation Area. Without it we would still be looking at a heap of rubble.

The Conference did agree unanimously about one need - the Government must provide a strong lead and must carry out a thorough investigation of the whereabouts, extent and ownership of our unused land, and do everything in its power to ensure that it is used for some sensible purpose. It was felt that the task was not beyond them, given modern resources. As Max Nicholson said, a likely lad named William carried out a similar task over 900 years ago.

There was a general feeling that it was criminal folly to use up our precious green fields for housing before tackling the problem of our urban wastelands, although it was felt that the whole urban environment and fringes of such wastelands must be made attractive if people were expected to live there again. At long last it was realised even in high places that our agricultural and land of high landscape value was a finite resource not to be plundered recklessly. Connected with this problem was the reminder that population trends show a levelling out and then a downward trend in the future.

This was a most successful gathering. All present hoped it will lead to some positive action.

Jack Scruton



### Cressex Housing Development

We have received the following from the Vice Chairman of the Cressex Residents' Association. We feel sure that this very important problem will be of interest to all our members and Affiliated Societies. Certainly we share the fears of the residents of Cressex about the possible effects of the proposed increase in density.

Proposed Housing Development between Cressex Road and the M.40 known as H2.  
Planning application W/6103/80

The above planning application by Wycombe District Council is due to be discussed by the Planning Committee at Bellfield House on the 23rd July, 1980. Whilst the local Cressex and District Residents Association are not opposed to the building of houses on the site they are concerned about several aspects of the application.

Firstly they are anxious that conditions imposed by the County Council on the previous application regarding completion of the Spine Road between the Turnpike and Handycross roundabouts prior to the full development of the site are maintained.

They also maintain the new application for the building of 950 dwellings on the land for which the District Council originally gave itself permission for 650 dwellings will result in an unacceptable density.

To illustrate the effect of the latest planning application consider the following:-

1. The existing Holmers Farm Estate was built at the high density of 12.58 houses per acre. The new adjoining estate will be built at a density of 16.8 houses per acre - a 34% increase!
2. The total number of dwellings in the combined Holmers Farm/H2 Estates will be 1,350, housing approximately 6,000 people. This is approximately the population of a town like Princes Risborough, all built on what is literally a traffic island bounded by the Motorway and Cressex Road.

The Association is not impressed by the Council suggestions of a "village concept" for the development of this size and density. This is in any case outside of the scope of the present planning application and does not compare in anyway with facilities which are normally available for a town of some 6,000 people.

The Association believes this vast number of people will impose an intolerable strain on the already overburdened amenities of the area, road system and for example schools and transport.

R S Powell  
 Vice-Chairman

### The Period Home

This is the title of a new publication especially for those who own or are interested in Listed Buildings. Contributors include Matthew Saunders of the Ancient Monuments Society and Cecil Hewett whose work on timber buildings and joints was featured recently in a BBC Television Chronicle programme. Other articles cover legal guidelines and grants, and information, on how to date your house, not only from available documents, but also from the structure. This bi-monthly magazine promises to be very worthwhile and informative, and will be of great interest to our Historic Buildings Group. For anyone else in the Society who may be interested, subscription forms are available from the Hon. Secretary.

Janet Tully

### Historic Building Group

A Public Inquiry was held on 22nd and 23rd May to decide on the way four cottages in West Wycombe High Street should be restored, and the Society in supporting the Wycombe District Council found itself in the unusual position of opposing the National Trust. Both sides believed very strongly in the need to restore the cottages and provide up to date amenities. To bring them back into use would benefit the village and help to maintain a lively community. The argument centred on the way the work should be carried out and whether the Trust should remove some of the "pokey" but endearing features which are at the back of the cottages. Such things as old chimney stacks, small extensions and bits of roof which are so characteristic of this outstanding Conservation Area.

The Inquiry was a friendly affair and provided a very useful exploration of what is best for the village. Although we disagreed with the National Trust we are firm supporters of the splendid work they continue to carry out in the village.

### Old Chequers.

It had been hoped that a firm of builders from Newbury would negotiate the sale of the Old Chequers from the current owners, British Lane, and then carry out a restoration of the building. They have now withdrawn, but British Lane are pursuing the question of a possible restoration. To this end a further detailed inspection of the timbers from the upper floor and roof, which were removed, will now be undertaken under the supervision of Chris Wallis of the Chiltern Society, an expert in oak timbers. After the inspection an assessment will be made of the condition of the timbers and how many could be used in the work of restoration, and depending on this whether a proper restoration is possible.

Janet Tully

### Barns at Rockalls Farm

In our last Newsletter we featured the restoration of the barns at Rockalls Farm, but we failed to pay tribute to all the people concerned. We apologise to Mr I L Beeks whose firm was responsible for the complete restoration of the barns, Mr Lacey being responsible for their design. Mr Beeks and his craftsmen transformed the barns, using great skill, and giving new life to these old barns which would otherwise have fallen into decay. We apologise too, to Mr Lacey for any embarrassment caused by our inaccurate account.

Jack Scruton

### Heritage Group

Being a member of the Heritage group is good exercise for the memory. The work is to identify shortcomings and apply persistent pressure for improvement. Most of it takes a very long time, and one has to remember the issues and to do the prodding at the appropriate times. In 1974 we started the Co-op. After nearly 6 years, persistent appeals have resulted in above average response of improvement and maintenance.

We still have a long way to go on several major issues, notable pedestrianisation of the High Street and improvements to Frogmoor. The pressure must be maintained there.

Our interest in the Western parts of the town has been vindicated by the Council's declaration of a General Improvement Area there. We are now stepping up our appeal to the Council for similar action in the Saffron Platt area that lies to the East of the town centre. For years it has suffered the twilight effects of vacant demolition sites and temporary car parks.

Care too must be taken not to overlook seemingly "safe" cases. Have you noticed how run-down our lovely Guildhall is beginning to look? Regarded by many as the jewel of the High Street, it is not just a Grade I listed Building, but a Scheduled Ancient Monument as well.

Justifiably the subject of extensive restoration in the early 1970's, it now looks as if it is being neglected. There can be no acceptable defence for that.

If you would like to enjoy a bit of memory exercising, how about joining the Group?

Mike Hammett



(3) & (4)

### Trails

Our Town Trail - "A Walk through the Conservation Area" - has been reprinted. This trail, written and illustrated by the late Jim Cottrell, helped by Lorna Cassidy, has been very successful and 6,000 copies have been sold. We think it is a very attractive walk and a very suitable companion for our new Water Trail round the Rye. These trails are on sale at 15p each in W.H. Smith's, the Wycombe Bookshop, the Municipal Offices in Queen Victoria Road, and in the Town Museum. We hope that all our members will buy them and introduce them to their friends.

Martin Kipping



## Europa Nostra

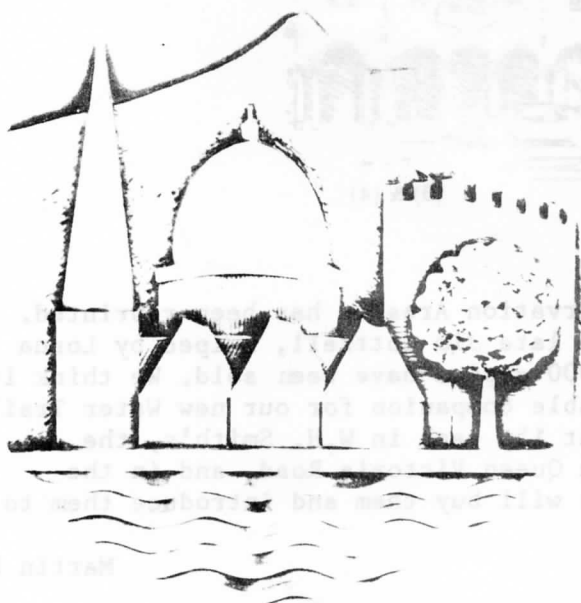
We are affiliated to this European Organisation, and much appreciate the stream of interesting and useful information from the Council of Europe about the protection and enhancement of our common heritage throughout Europe. The Council of Europe was the inspiration behind the 1975 European Architectural Heritage Campaign and the Council has continued to press for increasing action throughout Europe to prevent further serious losses in the face of ever increasing destructive pressures.

After the success of E.A.H.Y., the Council is now moving to a new campaign - one of Urban Renaissance throughout Europe. Rehabilitation instead of the bulldozer is the theme. There is also deep concern throughout Europe about the 'dying village'. In many rural areas there is still a migration to urban areas because of the attraction of towns, their superior amenities, and the lack of employment in the countryside. This is very evident in our own County of Buckinghamshire, where the indigenous village populations have nearly all disappeared and been replaced by a growing army of commuters.

The Council of Europe's recent declaration includes the following significant passage :

"Above all, we shall continue to press for a change of attitude and determination by national, regional and local authorities to accept their responsibilities for maintaining and improving the existing environment and expressing through their policies the belief that conservation of the architectural heritage is not just a luxury but a necessity for men and women in Europe who wish to enjoy and enrich their existence".

Bill Willson



# EUROPA NOSTRA



### Trees Group

We are sorry to learn that Mr Martin Ward, Arboriculturalist to Wycombe District Council for the past 3 years, has now left this appointment to gain further experience. Mr Ward was responsible for much valuable work with the District Council, securing many fine trees in the area with T.P.O's and undertaking tree planting over a wide area. We have been glad to co-operate with him and his Department in National Tree Week, liaising with local schools in planting trees on selected sites - almost all the Middle Schools in High Wycombe, and extending to Marlow last year, have taken part. We are glad to know that an appointment will be made to replace him.

Even more serious is the news that the District Council has severely cut back their staff in the Parks Department and have made no allocation of funds for tree planting this coming year. This is a most regrettable and retrograde decision considering the desperate need for more trees in this country. With 15.5 million elms lost to Dutch Elm disease, constant loss of trees to development, as well as natural causes, such as old age and unfavourable weather, this country is in a sad plight for trees. We have only 9% forest coverage, while Germany has 30% and France has 25%. Is this reflected in our economic situation? The Forestry Commission advise that 6 saplings need to be growing to replace each tree lost. At present, nationally we have only one tree growing for the loss of every 2 mature trees.

Bearing this in mind we ask for your support in the following efforts. The Tree Council are asking every family to plant and care for one tree each year for the next three years. If we all do this our tree coverage will substantially increased. Please will you do so.

Furthermore, the Tree Council are also suggesting that an avenue of 80 trees, or a copse of that number, be planted by the District Council to commemorate the Queen Mother's 80th Birthday. The District Council has asked for our assistance in raising the money, and whilst urging them to reconsider their decision not to allocate funds for treeplanting, we feel the effort should be supported. Can you suggest any firm or organisation who might like to contribute?

In addition, we would like to commemorate the Queen Mother's Birthday ourselves by planting some trees. For this we need your contribution. If all our members would contribute a sum, however small, we could make this grand lady's Birthday a real celebration. Please send your contribution to our Hon. Secretary indicating it is for this purpose.

Barbara Rippington



### A Journey to Kelkheim

Two of our members, Lorna Cassidy and Heather Hoare, visited Kelkheim in Germany earlier this year, and we asked Heather if she could write an article about this interesting visit. Here it is:

"When my friend Lorna Cassidy invited me to join her on a four hundred mile cycle ride from Ostend to Kelkheim in West Germany I decided that it was an experience not to be missed. The purpose of Lorna's visit was to be present for the opening of an exhibition of her pictures of High Wycombe. This was being staged as a return gesture to the exhibition held in our Town Hall entitled "Impressions of Kelkheim". As the visit had a distinctly town emphasis I decided to link my cycling with sponsorship and raise money for Wycombe General Hospital. Accordingly we set off on Easter Monday knowing that if I completed the journey the hospital would benefit by over £200.

The first part of the journey we experienced cold weather but later I was forced to buy sunburn cream! After some six days Lorna experienced health problems and we decided that I would go on alone and she would complete her journey by train. I eventually reached Kelkheim with a day to spare before the exhibition was due to open. It had taken eleven days and I had completed exactly four hundred miles.

The exhibition was held in their Town Hall and we were presented with flowers from an environmental group who were impressed with our travelling by bicycle as they are trying to promote the idea of more cycle lanes in their town. The Town Hall is a modern edifice superceding an old timber framed building. The latter now stands in what resembles our own "Western Desert" and was in danger of being demolished. However, plans have now been put forward to move the building to another site and give it a new life. There are still very many lovely barns in the town, once a predominantly agricultural area, the terra cotta pantiles contrasting very pleasantly with the white facades. Kelkheim has certain similarities with High Wycombe in so much that it is in a valley and a river runs through the town. We learned that this asset is in danger of being culverted but this is being vigorously resisted by the environmentalists.

After five days we sent the bicycles ahead and returned home by train. Lorna's pictures were well received and Wycombe Hospital has benefited by £200. We enjoyed our trip and it was interesting to hear how people in another country are approaching the problems of conservation which are so similar in our own".

Laß mich leben



Dir  
zuliebe

BUND Landesverband Hessen e.V.

### Membership and Finance

Our coffers are almost empty, so we appeal to our members and affiliated Societies to help the Society by prompt payment of subscriptions in response to our recent circular letter. Payment without further reminders will save a great deal in printing reminders, postage, and foot slogging on the part of our faithful "postmen".

The Civic Trust has created a kind of league table of Amenity Societies and have worked out that about 1 in 147 of the High Wycombe and District population belong to the High Wycombe Society. This is an average figure for an Amenity Society and does not indicate that the 99.32% who do not belong, are not in agreement with the work we try to carry out. However, we are sure that we could increase our membership and influence with the help of our members in recruiting. A membership form is enclosed and we ask each one of our members to gain another member by means of this form. This Newsletter might be useful as a means of persuasion.

Evelyn Roe.

### Re. Page 3 - Amersham Hill Flats

Good News - The Appeal by the developers to build 53 flats has been refused by the Inspector on the grounds of density, traffic problems in Malmers Well Road, unsatisfactory scale and loss of specimen trees.

### Future Programme

- |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday 6th September 1980 | Wycombe Show on the Rye. The Water Group of the Society will arrange the turning of the Pann Mill Water Wheel and will stage a mini-Exhibition on Pann Mill site.                                                                                                                                         |
| Sunday 7th September 1980   | Walkabout in Wycombe and along Water Trail with members of the Chesham Society. Meet at Open Air Car Park in Railway Place, Easton Street. There will be a break for tea at Marsh Green Mill, Bassetsbury Lane. Those interested should contact Mrs Elsie Fowler, 5 Bowden Lane. Tel: High Wycombe 21456. |
| Wednesday 8th October 1980  | Joint meeting in the Guildhall at 8.pm with Berks, Bucks and Oxon Naturalist Trust, with Susan Cowdy talking about "Wild Life in the Chilterns". Illustrated.                                                                                                                                             |
| Sunday 19th October 1980    | Visit to Lacey Green Windmill, beginning at 2 pm. Chris Wallis, responsible for the restoration will act as our guide. All those interested to contact Stuart King, Primrose Cottage, 17 Parish Piece, Holmer Green, Tel: High Wycombe 712027.                                                            |
| Wednesday 22nd October 1980 | Quarterly Meeting in the Guildhall at 8 pm Tom Porter, writer and Senior Lecturer at the Oxford Polytechnic will give an illustrated talk on "Colour in Architecture".                                                                                                                                    |
| January 1981                | Quarterly Meeting in the Guildhall to be arranged.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| April 1981                  | A.G.M. to be arranged. It is hoped to have a talk by John Sale, District Officer of the Forestry Commission, on the subject of Trees and Woodlands around High Wycombe.                                                                                                                                   |