



High Wycombe Society

HON.

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

NEWSLETTER No. 44

SUMMER 1981

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This was held in the Guildhall on 9th April, 1981, when the Annual Reports were accepted by members present and a new Committee was elected for this year. The Hon. Secretary and Treasurer Reports have been sent to all our members and Affiliated Societies, and they show that the Society is responding well to increasing pressures. The financial situation is more promising after a thin time.

Our President since 1973, Patrick Reyntiens, has with great regret resigned. He has moved out of our District and mounting pressures of commitments have not helped. We publish elsewhere a final message from Patrick. To commemorate his valuable work for the Society it was decided by our members that a 'Reyntiens' tree should be planted on the Rye, subject of course to permission from the Wycombe District Council.

We were very pleased to welcome Mr. Conner Wilson as our new President. He and his wife Nancy have always been great supporters of the Society, and it would be impossible to find a better President than Conner. Majorie Nash is again welcomed as our Vice-President.

Your new Executive Committee is now very well balanced between the sexes and we welcome new members, Mrs. Lily Simons and Mrs. Rennie Leach. The details of the Committee are as follows:

President: Mr. Conner Wilson, 9 Lodge Close, Lock Road, Marlow

Vice-President: Miss Marjorie Nash, 3 Alexandra Road, Pinions,
High Wycombe.

Chairman: Mr. E. Kearney, 37 Dean Close, Deeds Grove,
High Wycombe.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. R. Lawson, 39 Sunnycroft, Downley,
High Wycombe.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. J. Scruton, 17 London Road, High Wycombe.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. G. Standen, c/o Midland Bank, Corn Market,
High Wycombe.

Committee:

Mrs. E. Roe, 3 London Road, High Wycombe. (Membership Secretary)

Mr. R. Sims, 19 Wordsworth Road, High Wycombe. (Minuting Sec.)

Mrs. J. Tully, 107 Cock Lane, High Wycombe.

Mrs. R. Leach, 4 Ashdown Road, High Wycombe.

Mrs. A. Woodward, 20 Coningsby Road, High Wycombe.

Mrs. M. King, 8 Lansdell Avenue, Booker, High Wycombe.

Mrs. A. Callow, 7 Brenchwood Close, Downley, High Wycombe.

Mrs. L. Simons, Wood Cottage, 32 Fennels Way, Flackwell Heath.

Mr. C. Mills, 38 Amersham Hill Drive.

Mr. R.J. Rippington, 52a Booker Lane, High Wycombe.

Mr. L. Taylor, 21 Chestnut Lane, Hazlemere, High Wycombe.

High Wycombe Society

A MESSAGE FROM OUR RETIRING PRESIDENT, PATRICK REYTIENS, O.B.E.

Patrick was unable to attend our A.G.M. Instead he sent the following message to all our members.

" I am writing to you my last letter as President of the High Wycombe Society. I would like you to convey to the Society my deep regrets-at having to give up the post you all so kindly invited me to assume.

I know this may not be an auspicious moment to do a general review of the Society during the time I've been President but I thought, even at the risk of boring you all, a small recap wouldn't be amiss.

In the last seven years or so there has been a dramatic change for the better in the, one might call it, national Consciousness, even national conscience. This has been as a result of the ground-swell of opinion, made articulate, and gaining leverage, through the incessant, loving drudgery of the officers of numerous conservation societies, not least through your own officers. This ground-swell is not innovatory: no, on the contrary, it is the canny sober voice of old England. Heaven only knows how much the "Developers" and the pundits of cheap and rapid "progress" have in their greed, and in their innocence, swept away in the immediate past, so that the major portion of our towns is all but devastated. It is against this folly that the Society and other sister societies have proceeded with courage and ever depleted funds. Yet the victory is even now ours. The forces of inertia and unthinking ugliness are by now firmly on the run. Decisions are now made not in opposition to the consciousness of quality and probity, which is the essence of conservation, but in consultation. This is right and proper, however rare in the past. The consciousness of real living is taking over from the amnesia of mindless "progress".

I cannot recall all your victories and defeats. Suffice it is to say the victories were far more important than the defeats. Those, even now unresolved, such as the Chequers are of national importance. Those such as the defeat of the Loudwater rubbish tip will be seen to be a major stride in social and psychological sensitivity.

The time comes when a society has a crisis in, not so much identity as visionary purpose. It may be that the crisis, which is not sudden but creeps on like time's chariot itself, is already within sight of the Society. In the past it was easy to see a battle, with the lines drawn up clearly, lancing and galloping towards the forces of philistinism. That time, so clear-cut, with its immediate objectives standing out, may well be over by now.

We are now "in a night battle, with friend and foe together, fighting we know not clearly whom". The resolution lies in the forward and creative thinking which must come. In this, the treasures of the past will not be a sentimental posy in the municipal buttonhole, but will be a yardstick, a measure, against which the achievement of the present must be measured. And this in a practical way, involving pedestrians, proportion, scale, amenity, noise pollution abatement, privacy and "green comfort" : so that all the efforts of social, educational and economic planners will not be negated by the dull routine of the unimaginative.

Patrick. "

Our Treasurer, Ian Blaylock, after five years hard work, decided he must retire having regard to commitments with his new post. We were very sorry to say goodbye to Ian. He has done a great deal to rescue us from a difficult financial position. Luckily, Mr. Geoff Standen, Manager of the Midland Bank, has agreed to fill the post. We are very grateful to him and the Midland Bank for coming to our rescue.

After the business part of the A.G.M. we had the great pleasure of listening to Mr. Bernard Beard, Chief Forester of the Chiltern Forest. With the help of his beautiful slides he took us on a journey through time, depicting the changing woodland scene in Great Britain, leading to the present sad position of the present day, with this country at the bottom of the European League with regard to tree coverage. He spoke eloquently about the very difficult position in the Chilterns and the need for a tremendous effort from all concerned to remedy the situation.

Eric Alexander

PLANNING GROUP

Jacksons Site, Bourne End.

The problem of Jackson's site and the threat to the local community is still haunting the people of Bourne End. The Wycombe District Council has now granted permission for housing on the Sports Field, but Jacksons would prefer to use the Sports Field for industrial development as this would be more profitable. As the Bourne End Residents' Association has said in its last Newsletter, - "Throughout all these applications Jacksons have shown no consideration for the living environment of those around the mill site or for the effect of industrial/warehousing on the Bourne End community".

A Public Inquiry had been arranged for May 27th, but this has been deferred for two months at the request of Jacksons, who are no doubt pondering on the planning approval for housing.

Biffa Tip

Despite the decision of the Secretary of State, it is the apparent wish of the County Council to retain Dereham Valley on their list of sites suitable for refuse dumping. We understand that the Wycombe District Council do not agree with this, and the local residents are deeply troubled by the situation. They have made strong representation to the County Council to remove the site from the list of sites suitable for dumping. We have supported them and have urged the County Council to think again.

Jeane's Developments and Green Hill

The spectre of Jeane's Development Co. haunts the Green Hill area and refuses to go away. They have recently won planning permission on appeal to build 8 houses on the Green Farm site. Having won that they submitted a plan for 20 additional houses on the same site. The Wycombe District Council refused this, so Jeane's returned to the fray with a modified request for 13 houses. This awaits a decision by the Council. These continual attempts to spread housing into this most attractive area has met with regular opposition from the District Council, local residents and this Society. The persistence of Jeane's must be matched with resolute defence if this beautiful part of the Hughenden Valley is to be preserved.

Deangarden Rise

New Ideal Homes have again applied to build houses, flats and bungalows on land lying between Deangarden Rise estate and Deangarden Wood. This battle has been fought on four previous occasions, with Secretary of State decisions refusing the applications after Public Inquiries. The reasons for refusal have always been clear. To build there would mutilate the beautiful foreground to the wood and place the wood at risk, as well as destroying its function as a splendid backcloth. The important views from across the valley would be ruined. There would be added traffic hazards in the estate, and, perhaps most important of all, there would be very difficult problems at Abbey Barn Road and along the narrow Bassetsbury Lane, which could easily develop into a through way which avoided the A.40. The Deangarden Residents' Association and the Society have made strong representations to the Council to refuse the application.

Jack Scruton.

PARISH COUNCILS WHAT HIGH WYCOMBE IS MISSING ?

The latest issue of "Heritage Outlook", the Journal of the Civic Trust, contains three articles about parish councils. For people living in Downley, Hughenden Valley, Hazlemere or Loudwater, these articles may say nothing new. People in High Wycombe, however, might gain some insight into what they are missing.

"Parish councils are properly elected corporate bodies which can express their opinions to whom they like - opinions which will receive consideration - for no one lightly ignores the well-run and articulate parish council. They have the power, which is as great as they care to make it, of being the official voice of the people. And since 1972 they have the statutory power to comment on planning applications, a facility sought for many years, and these comments must be taken into account."

(In the report on each planning application that goes before Wycombe District Council's Planning Committee there is a space for "parish council comments" - it is noticeable how this space is always left blank for applications in High Wycombe.)

"The truth of the matter is that their powers are much wider than is generally supposed and that in a sense there is no limit to what they can do - provided it is in the interest of the local community and the electorate is willing to stump up the cash through the parish rate."

"The vast majority are useful at least as touchstones (usually reliable) of local opinion, to be listened to by upper tier authorities which want to avoid blunders, and most of those in larger communities provide some local amenities."

"Parish councils are usually the most cost-effective units of local government."

"It seems anomalous that in many districts and boroughs out-lying village communities enjoy the benefits of parish councils which are denied to electors living in the urban heartlands."

(For more information on parish councils, the reader is referred to the handbook "Powers and Constitution of Local Councils", obtainable for 30p plus postage from the National Association of Local Councils, 108 Great Russell Street, London W.C.1.)

High Wycombe has never had its own parish council. The powers of the old Borough Council, which were considerably greater than those of a parish council, were handed over in 1974 to the District Council, leaving the interests of the town to be represented by their 24 district councillors (out of 59 +) who were given the name "Charter Trustees" and precious little else.

High Wycombe is reckoned to be too big to have a separate parish council of its own - an upper limit of 20,000 was proposed in the 1972 Act. But it would be possible for several parishes to be formed within the town. This idea has already been suggested by the Society and one of its affiliated residents' associations, but it will require a lot more support to get off the ground. There is a good opportunity now. The District Council is engaged on a review of parish boundaries (the most obvious thing to emerge so far has been the controversy over separate parish status for Hazlemere). So far they have not been willing to consider the creation of new parish councils within High Wycombe.

If there were a big enough show of public support for the concept of parish councils in High Wycombe, the district councillors might change their minds. Alternatively, it could be brought to the attention of the Boundary Commissioners when they consider the proposals that the district council eventually puts forward. We therefore urge our members to give this idea careful consideration, and if they support it to write to the district council to say so - and to let us know of their action, so that we can gauge the strength of our support.

Eric Alexander.

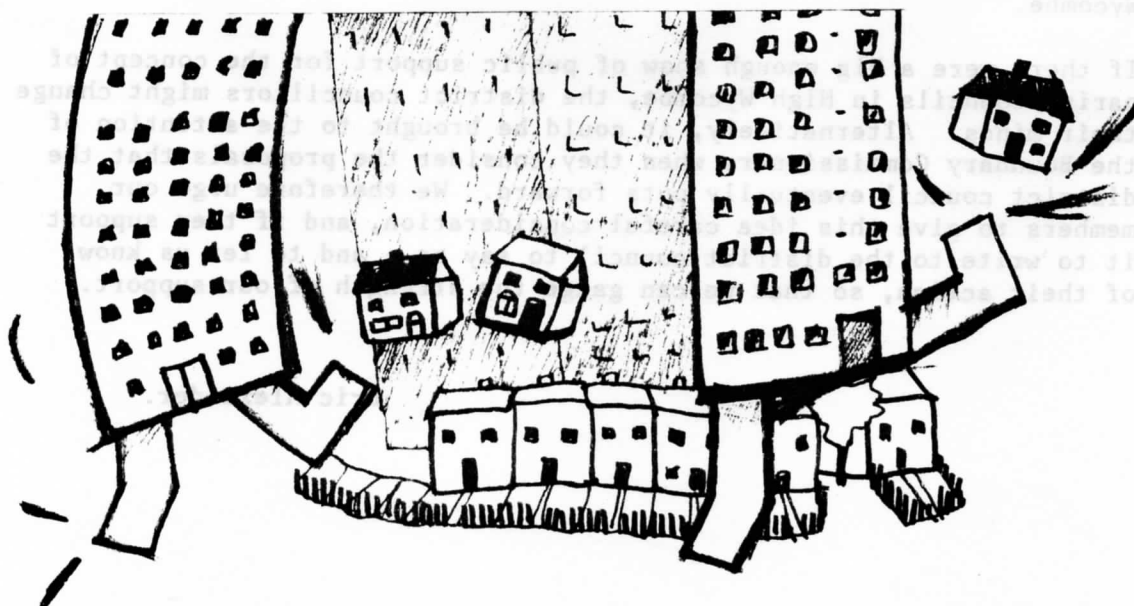
OFFICE DEVELOPMENTS IN HIGH WYCOMBE

There has been a dramatic increase in Office development in and around the Town Centre and it seems that High Wycombe has become a happy hunting ground for large development companies. Some of the offices do conform with the County Structure Plan, in that they are associated with industry already established here, or they are earmarked for 'local users', but increasingly they seem to be partially or wholly speculative. This is a serious matter as it threatens the whole basis of the Structure Plan and the planned restraint policy for High Wycombe. It does not solve our local employment problems, it increases traffic within the town, it increases the demand for housing and it spreads a lifelessness into large parts of the town. In the many conversations we had with local people during the time of our Festival Exhibition a very frequent complaint was the increasing number of offices to let and a feeling that the situation was growing beyond control.

If firm control is not exercised parts of our town will become commercial deserts and all those interested in the welfare of our town will become cynical about the Country Structure Plan. This document was meant to be a bulwark against unbridled growth. It was created after the most detailed examination in public, with County and District Councils as the main architects, and approved by the Secretary of State.

If major departures from the Plan are continued it will become something of a sick joke. We feel that saturation point has been reached and we hope our District Council will resist present and future pressure for speculative office developments.

Jack Scruton.



THE RETURN OF THE JUGGERNAUTS (OR THE BIRTH OF SUPERJUGGERNAUTS)

In January, 1970, the then Minister of Transport consulted many organisations about proposals put forward by the motor manufacturers for an increase in the maximum permitted weight of road goods vehicles. These proposals included the following:-

- (a) articulated lorries - increase loaded weight limit from 32 to 44 tons (Imperial); increase length from 15 to 15½ metres
- (b) rigid lorries - increase loaded weight limit from 28 to 30 tons.
- (c) rigid/lorry/trailer combination - increase loaded weight limit from 32 to 56 tons.
- (d) intermediate-sized vehicles - various, mainly smaller, increases in the loaded weight limits

The Civic Trust was one of the organisations consulted, and they in turn consulted Amenity Societies throughout the country. Some 300 of them prepared replies in time for a meeting held on 10th February, 1970. The High Wycombe Society was one of them.

This was the first time that the Trust and local Amenity Societies had been given the opportunity to express their views on increases allowed since 1957 ! In particular, it was considered that these views would have considerable relevance in respect of the impact of the increases allowed in 1964 and 1968.

Because of the nature of the objections raised by the Societies, the Trust prepared a report in October, 1970, which listed 30 recommendations to lessen the impact of heavy lorries on people's lives. These were in addition to the views of the Trust submitted to the Minister on 10th February, 1970, in a preliminary memorandum. They had suggested that the Ministry should undertake a review of existing and possible new regulations to control the routine of heavy traffic, examine the feasibility of the more widespread use of such regulators and consider the implications for road construction of the need to rid certain areas of heavy traffic altogether. Only then would it be possible to arrive at realistic estimates and the costs and benefits (or otherwise) of permitting bigger lorries.

A sensible approach one might argue, but here we are in 1981 with a maximum lorry weight of 32.5 tonnes (note we are now metricated !) and the European Parliament is considering 40 tonnes, with the European Commission howling for 44 tonnes.

It is sad to reflect that the recommendations put forward by the Amenity Societies in 1970 were virtually ignored. (Some concessions on noise limits have been made but you would hardly notice !), and the 32 tonner is ubiquitous. Presumably the recommendations were either put in the Minister's "too hard" file or immediately dumped in the waste paper basket

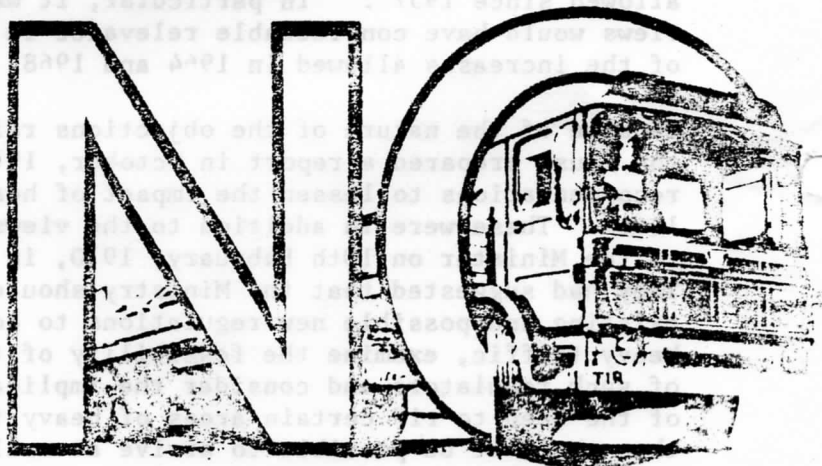
Once again there is much lobbying going on by the motor manufacturers and the Freight Transport Association to allow these increases in permitted weights. When people question official estimates and statistics put forward by Government Departments and interested parties, and supply opposing information, then they are accused of making unsupportable statements which condemn their own arguments.

I can only beg you all to write to your Member of Parliament and your Member of the European Parliament to express your strongest disapproval if you care for your environment (and wish to be spared the expense of re-building all the motorways).

Ted Kearney. Chairman.

Now is the time to say

**Write to your Member of Parliament
and to your
Member of the European Parliament**



P.S. The Minister of Transport has now declared total rejection of 44 tonnes lorries on British Roads.

HISTORIC BUILDING GROUP

Victorian Society Cemetery Survey

During the last three years the Victorian Society has been conducting a nationwide survey to identify and describe our more notable nineteenth cemeteries. This survey, undertaken against a background of appalling vandalism and widespread draconian clearance schemes is becoming daily more urgent. The Society has already received a good deal of information from areas throughout England and Wales, but as yet nothing from High Wycombe and district.

In the Autumn of 1980 they relaunched the survey with the intention of completing it within a year. The results will be published as part of a fully illustrated report on the importance and the problems of the nation's cemeteries. It is a marvellous opportunity for members of the High Wycombe Society who enjoy browsing round old cemeteries to do so with a purpose. They will contribute to a most valuable area of the Victorian Society's work and help to underline the enormous historical and recreational value of our urban cemeteries.

The Architectural Adviser for the Victorian Society has issued us with self-explanatory survey forms and the investigator is asked to give the name of the town and cemetery, its acreage, date of foundation and founding company, buildings (chapels, lodges, gates etc.), landscaper (where known) and notable tombs. Anyone who is interested in helping with this worthwhile and fascinating project may obtain forms and further details from Louise Scull, Telephone No. H.W. 26045

Louise Scull

The Victorian Society - Are you a member ?

The Victorian Society is appealing for more members ! For twenty-two years it has enhanced public awareness of the arts and architecture of the Victorian period, but now it is assailed like every person and organisation in the country, by rising prices. It has had much success in saving and preserving our Victorian heritage but it cannot relax these efforts - much is still at risk. If this is done nationally the Society will be furnished with resources to prevent contraction of its work and indeed to expand it. If you are really interested in the nineteenth century you will appreciate their quarterly newsletters packed with information on literature, the arts, architecture, walks, visits, talks, conferences and the latest publications. There is an exciting programme of cultural and social events which take place in London and throughout the country.

From March 1981 the subscription rates will be:

Ordinary - £8.00 Family - £12.00 Under 25 & Senior Citizens - £5.00

Further details may be obtained from:

Hon. Membership Secretary,
c/o 1, Priory Gardens,
London, W.4.

Louise Scull

WESLEY CHAPEL, HALL & HOUSE

The latest threat to our Conservation Area is the most serious so far, and the Society has opposed it vigorously. A local development company would like to demolish the Wesley Chapel, Hall and House in Priory Road and in their place build yet another office block, with a smaller church in the background. Our main objections are:

1. Mutilation of a vital part of our Conservation Area.
2. Destruction of buildings of architectural and historical merit, designed by well known Victorian architects.
3. Speculative development contrary to the Structure Plan.
4. Increase in traffic in a sensitive area.
5. Deadening effect of a large office block on the street scene.

The Victorian Society supports the Society and has asked the District Council to refuse the application. We believe that the buildings are worthy of listing as are other fine Victorian buildings in the town, and we hope that the Department of the Environment will agree and provide this powerful protection.

Janet Tully.

A VISIT TO WEST WYCOMBE

Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun - and even madder High Wycombe Society members trek out in Monsoon rain. In India this would be understandable; the rains persist for weeks. In West Wycombe on Sunday, May 17th, it appeared they would do the same. A tour of the village led by Mr. Mills of the National Trust, aided by Christopher Wall and Ken Brazier, had been planned for the afternoon, and come hail or high water (and come they both did), the tour would take place.

We're grateful it did. Following the newly devised West Wycombe village architectural trail, buildings which formerly were so familiar to us - we had all visited there or passed through many times before - were seen with greater clarity and understanding, and not only because they were washed clean by the torrent.

Guided by the infectious enthusiasm of Mr. Mills, we marvelled at nogging, dentils and fenders, at a hipped roof and inscribed foundation stones. So many different chimney styles - even more variation in windows.

Isn't much of our appreciation of old buildings lie in admiration of their superb individuality - so welcome in contrast with modern uniformity. Perhaps when our houses of today are 400 years old (will they last that long?) they too will have been changed and altered, and developed characters of their own.

In West Wycombe we find tradition, innovation and novelty in buildings which having begun in the 16th to 18th centuries, continue to be lived in today. The village is of endless interest, with much to tell us about our social and private life in the past, and thanks to the careful work of Mr. Mills and his team, whilst retaining much of its age-old character, the buildings still serve for modern life styles.

To enjoy it as it deserves one needs not just to look, but to see, and an invaluable aid here is the pamphlet produced by the National Trust - "West Wycombe Village Architectural Trail", available from the National Trust or from our Secretary.

Stimulated and talkative we dripped into the Old Post Office, where Jane Wardrop and Louise Scull had kindly offered us tea. This was no ordinary tea, however. A feast awaited us - you never saw such cakes, of all sizes, shapes and colour - almond, chocolate, coffee cakes and gateaux, and as fast as one plateful was cleared, another took its place. Diet sheets abandoned, we indulged in all, accompanied by generous cups of good hot tea.

Replete, and steaming only a little, we departed content - and the event over, the rain had, of course, stopped.

Barbara Rippington.

HAZLEMERE BARN

Hughenden Parish Council applied to the Wycombe District Council to demolish the old barn in Hazlemere Park. This was refused and so the application went to a Public Inquiry on 12th May. I was asked to represent the High Wycombe Society and to speak for the retention of the building. This was my first experience of a Public Inquiry and I was somewhat pushed in at the deep end !

On arrival at Bellfield House Chamber I was pleased to see that I was not alone. Among those who came in support of keeping the barn were Chris Wallis, Heather Hoare, Brian Dollimore and David Wainman, who had enough papers to put an Old Bailey Q.C. to shame. Chris Wallis submitted plans of what could be done with the barn using some imagination, the Bucks Free Press reporter did his crossword puzzle, while Heather Hoare put on a display of old photographs and further plans for the barn's future, using me as an easel to good advantage.

The Inquiry was on the whole orderly and good humoured with the Hughenden Parish Council putting their case forcefully. As is usual these days it all seems to hinge around money - whether it was cheaper to pull the barn down and rebuild, or, as the High Wycombe Society suggested, that it was feasible to restore it and use it for a public amenity. It was also suggested that it could be converted into a dwelling, a pub, or a shop.

In my submission I tried to place the barn in its local historical context as I felt this was of some importance. The following is an extract of this.

"I can remember the area when it was all park land, with trees, a Georgian house with many outbuildings including the barn. Much of the estate was formed during the late 18th Century and the 19th Century. Little is known of the estate before 1825, when the squire, one Grainger Hines, had the house renovated. He was followed by Squire Eakley, who improved the park by planting many fine trees and shrubs. Next followed Alfred Leadbetter, a High Wycombe brewer who had four sons. During their stay there was much social activity. One son was Master of the Old Berkeley Fox Hounds, and people came from far and wide to see the riders, horses and hounds. They were also able to see the many wild beasts, animals and birds that were kept there during the first World War, when the estate was the headquarters of the World Zoological Trading Co.Ltd. However, the house fell into disrepair between the wars, when it became uninhabited. With the outbreak of World War II the park became a hutted camp for the army, with the house used as an Officers' Mess.

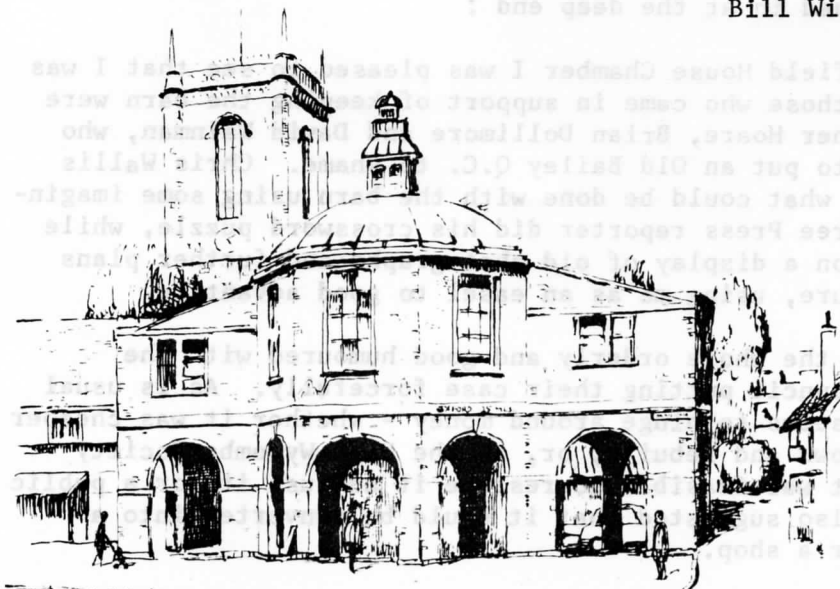
After the war came the squatters. Today the house has gone, and so have many fine trees and personal memories. They have been replaced by a much needed housing estate and a population of approximately 2,000. But we do still have the barn as a reminder of Hazlemere's past history, the only listed building in the area, and one that can still be put to good use for the benefit of the local community."

Stuart King.

HERITAGE GROUP

Eric Fowler's delightful drawings, which first appeared as part of our Water Trail, and then were enlarged as prints, have now taken on a new role as notelets which can be used for many purposes. They are very attractive and there's nothing like them in the town. There are six scenes of well known buildings - the Guildhall, Little Market House, Parish Church, Abbey School, Bassetsbury Mill and Marsh Green Mill. With 6 envelopes included they are a bargain at 60p. You can buy them at the Gift Shop in Crendon Street and in the Municipal Offices Information Centre in Queen Victoria Road.

Bill Willson.



The Little Market House

PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY IN THE TOWN CENTRE

For a long time the Society has been campaigning for pedestrian priority in the High Street, and restricted Traffic in the town centre streets. There are undeniable difficulties to be overcome in attaining traffic flows and servicing arrangements, but High Wycombe is not exceptional in this respect. Hundreds of other towns had similar difficulties but have overcome them to create attractive, traffic-free surroundings, where frustration, congestion and incompatibility of shoppers and traffic previously existed.

The local Chamber of Trade has expressed great concern about the possible bad effects on trade by a pedestrian priority scheme, but this kind of response is not unusual. In other towns local traders feared the worst when such schemes were implemented, but happily in nearly every case their fears were not realised. The Civic Trust has studied a great number of schemes that have been carried out, and in the majority of these trade has increased substantially. In a few trade remains the same or with some slight improvement. Only rarely has trade deteriorated.

Earlier this year the District and County Councils gave notice that to investigate the alternative solutions to the traffic problems two experimental diversion and control systems would be put into operation for trial periods, when the work on the Inner Relief Road has been completed. The Society welcomes the trials, for it is positive action in this important matter, but we have pointed out to the authorities some serious anxieties about the methods of assessing the trials. All that can be investigated in these trials is the effects of the traffic routing and servicing arrangements. We will not be able to experience the improved environment that will be possible when the relief from traffic is effected, for that will entail new landscape work and structure. The traffic alterations will be an upheaval and an irritation for many people - perhaps pedestrians as well as drivers. Without the corresponding improvement in the appearance and the additional attractions that will be possible ultimately, there may well be a reaction against the whole venture. We have asked for good and sustained publicity to show what improvements can follow from the successful diversion of vehicles, and it is hoped that this will counter the danger of a tendency to judge the validity of pedestrian priority on the experience of the traffic experiments alone.

High Wycombe deserves a break. The town centre could be a most attractive place to shop. Many town centres have been rescued from conditions similar to our own, and become places where shopping is enjoyed in attractive surroundings safe from the danger, fumes and frustration of traffic. Let us hope the same can be achieved in our own town.

Mike Hammett.

ANNUAL FESTIVAL EXHIBITION

This was our most successful Exhibition so far, and we had the most encouraging support for the Society's work from the many visitors. The wide range of photographs and information was provided most generously by many organisations and shops. We would like to thank all those who helped, including members of the Society who put it together or manned the Exhibition. We would also like to thank the Festival Committee for their support, the Wycombe District Council for allowing us the use of the Guildhall, and the Bucks Free Press for their great encouragement.

SHOPPING QUESTIONNAIRE

Many visitors to the Exhibition took the trouble to complete a Questionnaire about shopping in the Town Centre. We found a study of the result fascinating and enlightening. Mr. & Mrs. Abrahall, Mrs. Halse and Mrs. Tully very kindly analysed and summarised the replies, and the Bucks Free Press gave generous coverage. We believe it was a most successful exercise. Certainly it brought to light the feelings of people of all ages concerning the deficiencies in shopping in our Town Centre, and the need for some new thinking. Some form of traffic restraint, a greater variety of shops, improvements to the Octagon, and continual support for the Open Market, were among many proposals. We were most impressed by the serious way the questionnaire was tackled by both young and old, and the answers showed that local people do care about the town and are concerned about the need to carry out improvements.

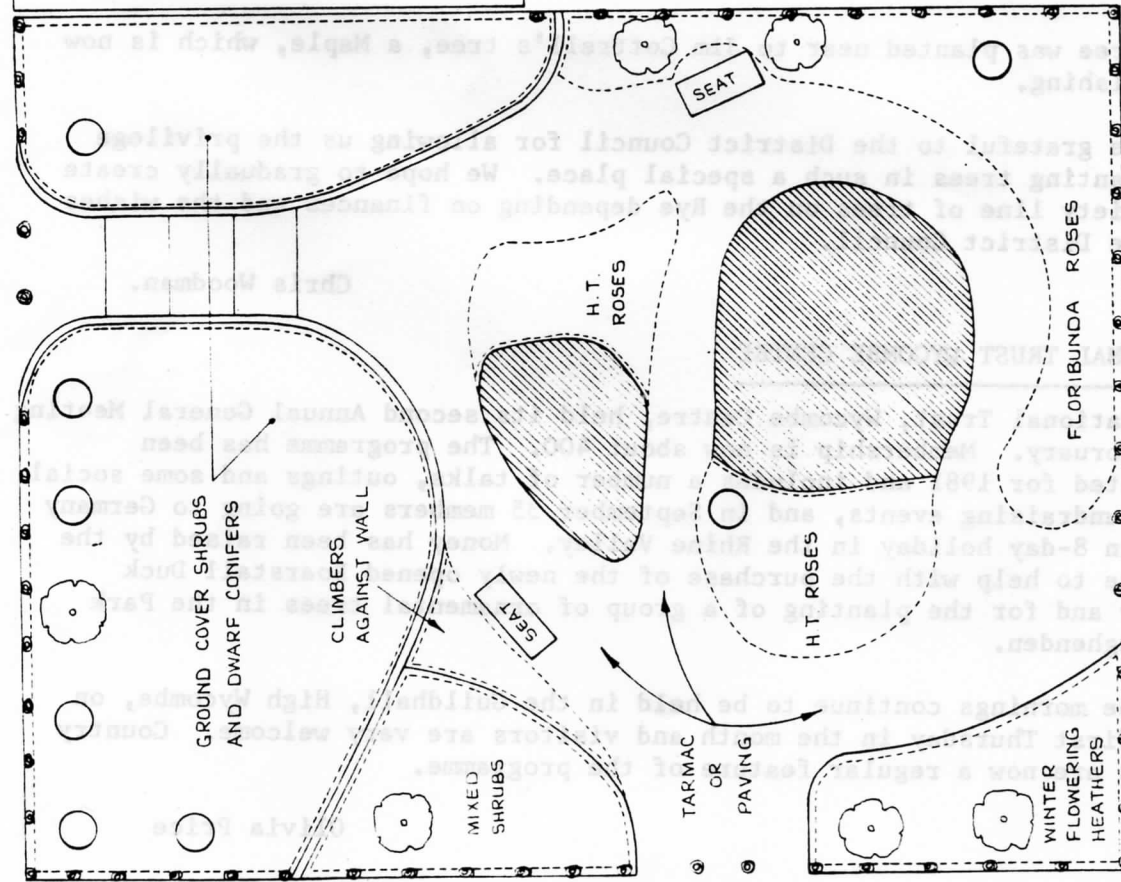
QUAKER BURIAL GROUND

We feel sure our members will be pleased to hear that the District Council has given its blessing to our proposal to create a garden at the Quaker Burial Ground in Station Road, which is part of the desolate open area known (at least by us) as the Eastern Desert. The Irish Club, the Quaker community, and youth voluntary groups are interested, as well, and a combined effort may transform the old Burial Ground. The Irish Club has undertaken to raise funds to support what is undoubtedly a big task. We show below a plan drawn up by Simon Barrow, a local landscape architect, but this may be modified as we tackle the various problems. No doubt some of our members would like to help when we make a start !

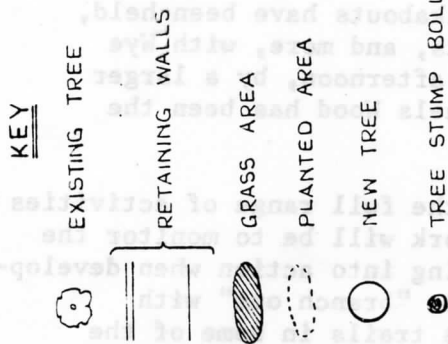
Bill Willson.

STATION ROAD

THE
IRISH
CLUB



CAR PARK



PLAN MADE FROM AN ORIGINAL IDEA
BY SIMON BARROW LANDSCAPES

A.E. WESTGATE C.ENG. F.I.M.U.E. M.I.H.E
TECHNICAL SERVICES OFFICER
BELLFIELD HOUSE
80, OXFORD ROAD
HIGH WYCOMBE
BUCKS.

T W I G

TWIG stands for Trees and Water Interest Group, and has been formed to take over the work of the former Tree and Woodlands Group and the Water Group. At present it consists of a nucleus of about 10 members, and 3 meetings have been held in members' homes. Two river walkabouts have been held, and sundry children have filled their welly boots, and more, with Wye water. Pann Mill has been turned, one very wet afternoon, by a larger group of helpers than anyone can remember. Fennels Wood has been the subject of a thorough inspection.

The group is still in its formative stages and the full range of activities is not yet decided. An important part of our work will be to monitor the state of our rivers, trees and woodlands and swing into action when development threatens. However, TWIG would also like to "branch out" with specialist surveys and the preparation of nature trails in some of the areas which have not yet come in for this sort of treatment. The Kingswood group is showing what can be done. So we need more members. Anyone with enthusiasm will be welcome, but those with specialist knowledge would be a particular asset. If you are interested please ring Roger Lawson on 28047.

TREE PLANTING

On 9th April Mrs. Tordoff, one of our members, with the help of friends and members of the Parks Department, planted a Red Chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea*) on the Rye in memory of her husband, the late Sam Tordoff. Mrs. Tordoff, who presented the tree, chose a red chestnut as it was Sam's favourite tree.

The tree was planted near to Jim Cottrell's tree, a Maple, which is now flourishing.

We are grateful to the District Council for allowing us the privilege of planting trees in such a special place. We hope to gradually create a Society line of trees on the Rye depending on finances and the wishes of the District Council.

Chris Woodman.

NATIONAL TRUST WYCOMBE CENTRE

The National Trust, Wycombe Centre, held its second Annual General Meeting in February. Membership is now about 400. The programme has been completed for 1981 and includes a number of talks, outings and some social and fundraising events, and in September 35 members are going to Germany for an 8-day holiday in the Rhine Valley. Money has been raised by the Centre to help with the purchase of the newly opened Boarstall Duck Decoy and for the planting of a group of ornamental trees in the Park at Hughenden.

Coffee mornings continue to be held in the Guildhall, High Wycombe, on the first Thursday in the month and visitors are very welcome. Country walks are now a regular feature of the programme.

Olivia Price

KATHLEEN PEATEY

Kathleen Peatey can surely look back with great satisfaction after a most successful year as our Town Mayor. She tackled with vigour and enthusiasm the great task of raising funds for the Park Crescent School for handicapped children, and her leadership resulted in the collection of the magnificent sum of £26,000.00 which was derived from so many activities, not least her daring exploits in a balloon ! Of course, the fund raising, though important, was only a part of Kathleen's work as Mayor, and many town activities gained great benefit from her presence and encouragement. Lady Mayors have been something of a rarity in Wycombe's history but if Kathleen is a typical example we could do with a lot more !

Jack Scruton.

ARE YOU A BACKSWOODSMAN - OR WOMAN ?

Most Amenity Societies seem to have a fair proportion of Backwoodsmen, and we seem to have our share. They do provide moral and financial support, but we would like to see them sometimes in the flesh.

We appeal to these shadowy figures to come out of the woods sometimes and attend meetings or social events, or join in some activity. It is disappointing that all the efforts of valiant 'postmen' in delivering letters seem to be in vain. They would be much encouraged if their efforts were rewarded by luring these reluctant members from their hiding places. Our meetings and other events are, we believe, friendly and interesting. The Society needs your visible support so please respond to this appeal.

Evelyn Roe.



FUTURE PROGRAMME OF THE SOCIETY

Please make a note of these in your diary and come if you can.

Wed. 7th October 1981

Quarterly Meeting in the Guildhall, beginning at 8.p.m. Denys Ovenden will give an illustrated talk on "The Making of a Natural History Book".

Fri. 20th November 1981

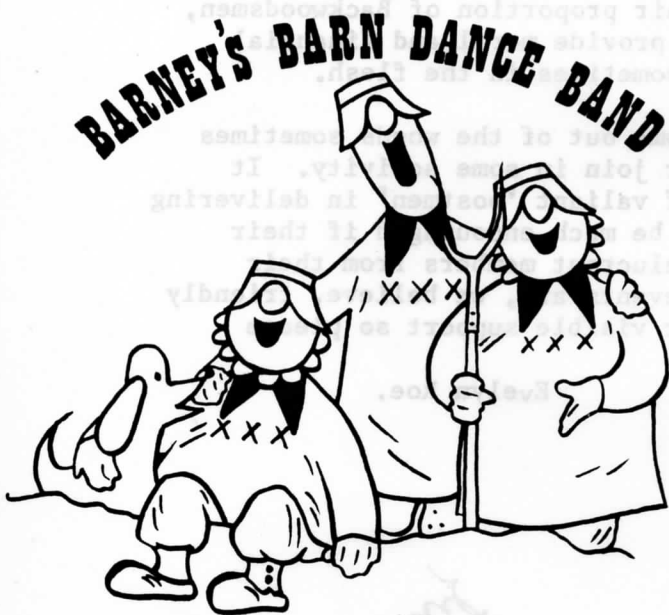
Dancing from 9.p.m. to midnight with the CASA LOMA Orchestra at the West Wycombe Hall.

Wed. 27th January 1982

Julian Prideaux, Regional Director of the National Trust, will give an illustrated talk about the work of the Trust, beginning at 8 p.m. in the Guildhall.

Sat. 20th March 1982

Barn Dance at Townfield House, from 7.30 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. Barney's Barn Dance Band will provide the music.



Thursday, 22nd April 1982

Annual General Meeting. Illustrated talk by Mike Hammett, on "Bricks and Brickwork". In the Guildhall, beginning at 7.30 p.m.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP MEETINGS

The Group is arranging a series of meetings in the Friends' Meeting House, 25 London Road, at which well known local speakers will speak about their own interests, with particular emphasis on local history, historic buildings and kindred subjects. We have arranged one so far, and we hope that others will follow in the Autumn and Spring of 1982. Our first one is:

Thursday, 24th September

Ivan Sparkes, Town Librarian, will speak about "Disraeli and the Wycombe Electorate". The talk will begin at 7.30 p.m.