

# HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

(Registered with the Civic Trust)

Registered Charity No. 257897

Hon. Secretary:  
J. Scruton Esq.,  
17 London Road,  
High Wycombe,  
Bucks. HP11 1BJ.

Tel: High Wycombe 25933

NEWSLETTER No. 53. WINTER 1983/84.

HERITAGE CENTRE FOR HIGH WYCOMBE AND DISTRICT.

As a result of the article in our Autumn Newsletter, we have received the following letter from Ivan Sparkes, Librarian, which we are very pleased to publish.

I.G. Sparkes,  
124 Green Hill,  
High Wycombe, Bucks  
HP13 5QB

Dear Mr. Scruton,

I was very pleased to see a review of the Heritage Exhibition which was recently held in the Guildhall in the Autumn edition of your newsletter. The report stresses the importance of such a project, and I am only too glad to have been able to co-operate in a scheme which arose out of a conversation between Councillor Mrs. Peatey and ex-Councillor Jim Harvey last year. I feel that the impetus came out of the town, out of the growing interest in the area fostered by individuals and by organisations such as yours, who recall the early days in Wycombe.

The sponsorship by the District Council has enabled the planning of the contents of the exhibition to range over the whole of the District Council, and so not limit it to what could have been a rather parochial view of High Wycombe itself.

The October preview in the Guildhall was useful in that it showed the wide interest in the old photographs, and it was valuable in that it produced items which will be able to be displayed in future years. The idea of a 'Heritage Exhibition' is a simple fact, for it grows as our knowledge grows; so we look forward to changing its emphasis and content as time goes on, and therefore it should be able to reflect something of the beauty and changing history of the Thames and Chilterns in which it is set.

Yours sincerely,

I.G. Sparkes.

## PLANNING.

The involvement of the Society in planning matters is probably our most important function, and we do our utmost to respond to important planning applications and proposals. This is a most difficult matter for a voluntary organisation, but it is one we must not ignore. It is beyond the scope of a Newsletter to give details of all the work undertaken, but we do manage to publish information about the more important developments. The following items have claimed our attention recently.

Green Belt. A draft Ministry Circular, which was published recently by the Department of the Environment, was clearly a threat to the Green Belt policies and the document caused widespread alarm. The general response was very strong opposition, and we supported the campaign waged by the Council for the Protection of Rural England. As a result the Department decided to withdraw the Circular for re-drafting. In the Guardian of 11th January, 1984, it was stated that "Mr. Jenkins has given assurances that the Government is committed to maintaining the existing Green Belt boundaries". In striking contrast was the announcement in the Times of 10th January, 1984, that the Department of the Environment has given permission for 400 houses, shops, and more than 50 industrial units, to be built on 99 acres of Green Belt land at Shotgate, Basildon, Essex. This must surely cast grave doubts on the assurances of Mr. Jenkins.

Housing. The Department of the Environment published another draft Circular, concerned with the provision of land for housing. This seemed an ominous document and would have placed the house building industry in the driving seat. The Circular met with widespread opposition. We sent our reasons for opposing directly to the Department and to Ray Whitney, our M.P. We have just been notified that this Circular has also been withdrawn, but of course it is to be re-drafted ready for the next battle!

Town Centre. The Town Centre Draft Strategy Statement, published in July, 1983, on which we submitted detailed comments on 30th September, 1983, has been adopted, practically verbatim, in November, 1983. The exercise in public participation <sup>was</sup> unbelievably fruitless.

The County Council have included in their transport policies programme finance for both land and capital expenditure for urban relief measures in High Wycombe. The sums for 1986/7, 1987/8 and 1988/9 are £1 million each year. This still needs ministerial approval. We said in our representations that the proposed Relief Road would create far more problems than it might solve. Although the Government, and both Councils, are committed to the strictest economy, we have little hope of stopping £3 millions being spent on urban road relief measures in High Wycombe. We do, however, hope to persuade the authorities to spend it more sensibly than is at present proposed. Money could be spent on improving roads and traffic conditions without carving up the town with "relief roads" and destroying sensitive areas. We could think of many more urgent needs, but if money is to be spent on roads, let it be spent responsibly.

Ted Kearney.

PLANNING (Cont).

An attempt by Bovis Homes to develop a piece of the A.O.N.B. adjoining Cryers Hill and Provost Wood was refused by our District Council, supported by the Hughenden Residents' Association and the Society. Bovis Homes appealed, but fortunately the Secretary of State agreed with the Inspector in his support of the objections. To develop the land would have been most unfortunate. This is a good example of the way local residents and the Society can give effective support to the District Council.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREA.

Access to the rear of District Council Offices.

A number of attempts have been made to interfere with the very special area by the River at the Council Offices. Two applications to create additional car parking were refused by the District Council Planning Committee. Recently a further application was made to build an access to the rear door of the Offices for vehicles to collect money. This would have marred the area and seemed unnecessary. We again opposed the intrusion and the Planning Committee refused the application. The determined stand taken by the Committee has been a great encouragement, and we hope this special place, which earned a Civic Trust Award, will now be restored to its former beauty and not used for some other purpose.

WESLEY CHURCH.

After a long and, at time, tense struggle, the Secretary of State has dismissed the appeal of the Wesley Church, in which the Church authorities sought to demolish the Hall and Manse, and build a very large office block and new Hall. The appeal had been opposed by the Wycombe District Council, supported by the Society and the Bucks Archaeological Society. The reasons for refusal given by the Ministry Inspector were very much the same as those submitted by those opposed to the proposals. The main one was the conflict with the County Structure Plan, para. 230, which is designed to prevent speculative growth in this area - a regulation which should no doubt have been used more often in recent years. The Inspector included other important reasons for refusal. These were the dominating scale of the proposed office block in our town centre, its effect on the pleasant residential area of Castle Place, the certainty of a severe parking problem, the loss of familiar buildings, and the severe long-term disruption of the street scene.

The maintenance of the Church, Hall and Manse is a problem which should not be solved in the manner proposed. We have always suggested that permission should be granted for suitable housing adjacent to Castle Place - an admirable place for people to live in the town centre. We believe that our District Council agree that this could provide an adequate solution.

Jack Scruton.

T.W.I.G. - TREES AND WATER INTEREST GROUP.

Messing about in water is usually a most enjoyable experience, especially when the exercise helps to improve our River Wye. On Saturday, 4th February, members of TWIG will meet at 10 a.m. at the Loudwater Boys' Club (which lies behind the White Blackbird pub), in order to clear the river. Any members who would like to help would be very welcome. Wellies or waders are required.

Roger Lawson.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS.

We had quite a good response to our appeal to members who were not up to date with their subscriptions, but unfortunately there are still an uncomfortable number outstanding. We must therefore make this further appeal to those who are still outstanding. We are coming to the end of the financial year and our financial situation is causing us a great deal of worry.

I would like to ask those people who pay by Banker's Order to check that they are paying the correct current rate of subscription, which is £2 for Individuals and £3 for family membership. This is a fairly painless method of payment, but it needs to be watched and kept up to date.

Janet Tully.

Membership Secretary, 107 Cock Lane, High Wycombe.

15th BIRTHDAY PARTY.

The Birthday Party held on 4th November, 1983, was a great success, and two members of the team responsible for the major part of the arrangements have provided the following record of their own feelings.

After some initial uncertainty as to whether the Society should hold a 15th Birthday Party or not, there can be no doubts that it was a great success and enjoyed by everyone.

November 4th saw 80 of us assembled in the Oak Room being entertained and wined and dined. A first class buffet supper was provided by four of the committee ladies, with the expert help of Pat Thacker and Diana Stone, who also created a marvellous 15th Birthday cake.

Throughout the evening we were enchanted by various performers - Wellesbourne School's young but talented jazz band, and later their polished 'pop' Group; 'The Taverners' singing some delightful unaccompanied songs; and Eric and Frances Alexander giving us food for thought with their satirical poems.

After supper, the birthday cake was cut and handed round, and then as a complete surprise to Jack Scruton, our intrepid Hon. Secretary, a cake was presented to him with thanks for 15 years sterling work for the Society. Altogether a very successful evening, which happily raised some welcome extra cash for the Society. We will all be looking forward to the next one with great anticipation.

Anna Birks.

Recipe for a successful 15th Birthday Party - 100 portions.

Ingredients:

- 1 birthday cake, decorated with High Wycombe Society motifs.
- 100 plates, knives and forks.
- 100 sausages.
- 100 slices of cold meat.
- 13 musicians from Wellesbourne.
- 30 portions of pizza.
- 4 quiches.
- 200 pats of butter.
- 8 Taverners singers.
- 100 baked potatoes
- 100 bread rolls.
- 11 bowls of varied salad.
- A pair of Alexanders.
- Assorted gateaux and fruit.
- 200 printed serviettes.

Add wine to taste.

Assemble all together in a suitable receptacle (e.g. the Oak Room).  
Await arrival of guests.

Firstly blend together the musicians, singers and Alexanders with the aid of a witty and eloquent M.C. Garnish with presentation to faithful Hon. Sec.

After a while serve rest of edible ingredients.

By now the original mix should be perfectly balanced. Continue to enjoy this delicious confection until time runs out. At midnight, stop. Wash up and clear away.

(Gently prise away from their chairs any guests still remaining after 12 O'clock).

from A kitchen assistant.

BARN DANCE.

Come to our Patrick's night Barn Dance on Saturday, 17th March, from 7.30 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. at the Royal British Legion Hall, St. Mary Street. We have arranged a new band - Wicked Willie's Barn Dance Band - and a new caller, and we are looking forward to a colourful evening. There will be a licenced bar, which will include soft drinks.

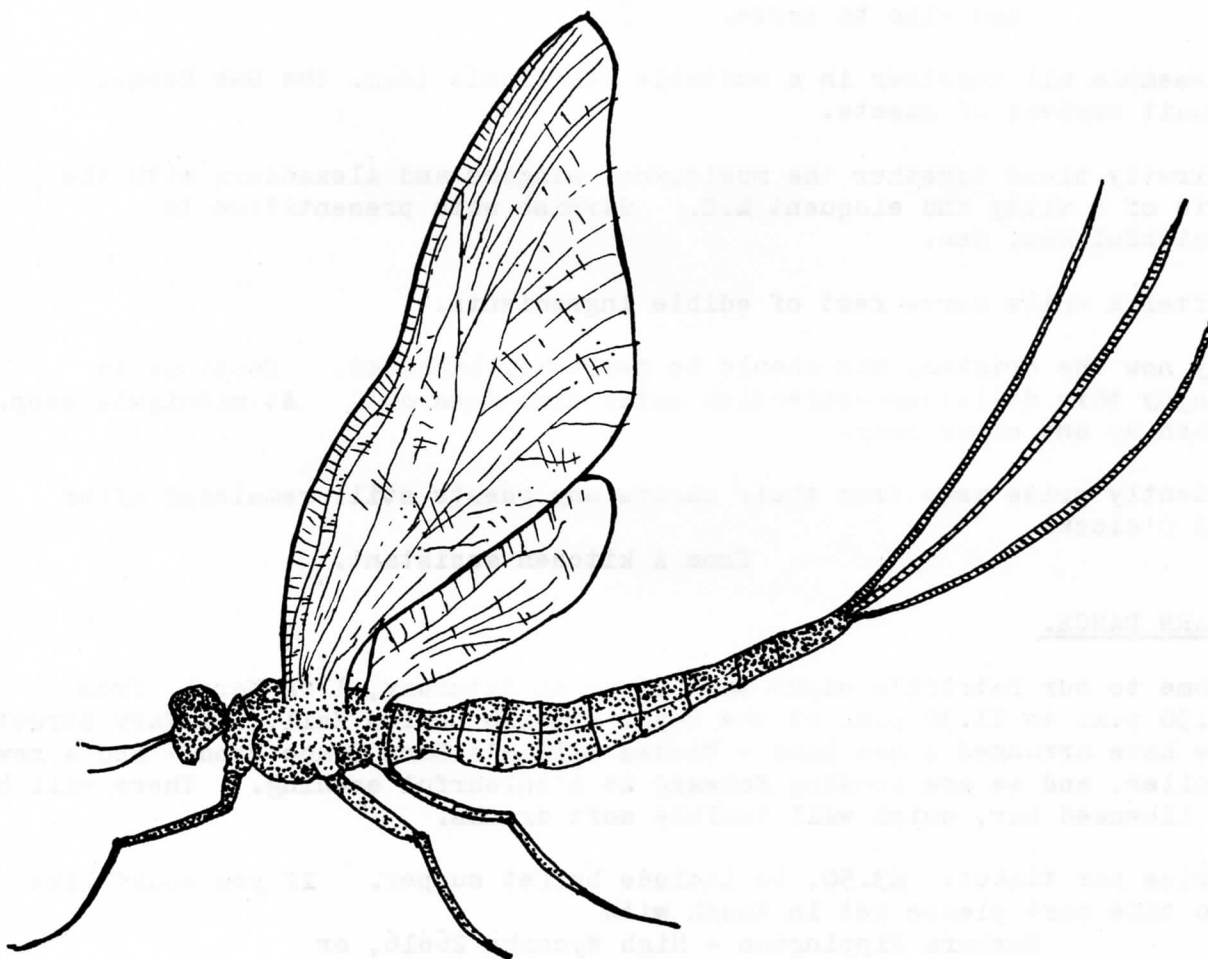
Price per ticket: £3.50, to include buffet supper. If you would like to take part please get in touch with

Barbara Rippington - High Wycombe 26616, or  
Annie Woodward - High Wycombe 27978.

FESTIVAL EXHIBITION.

We are planning to stage our Festival Exhibition in the Guildhall from Saturday, 24th March, 1984, to Saturday, 7th April, 1984. The theme "A Walk down the River Wye from West Wycombe to Bourne End" fits in very well, and fortuitously, with this year's European campaign for the protection of watery places, entitled "The Water's Edge".

Our previous Exhibitions have been successful because of the support of many members, especially in manning the Exhibition, and we are confident that similar support will be forthcoming this year. The Hon. Secretary would like to hear from any member who would be willing to help in looking after the Exhibition for a period of 2 hours. Some members may be able to carry out more than one session. The opening hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily except Sundays.



An adult May-fly. One of the series of drawings by Krystyna Barrow which are to be used in the Exhibition.

FUTURE PROGRAMME.

Tuesday, 7th February,  
1984.  
Guildhall, High Wycombe  
at 8 p.m.

Nigel Phillips, B.B.O.N.T. Warden of  
the Warburg Nature Reserve, Bix Bottom,  
Henley, will give an illustrated talk  
about the Reserve and the problems of  
Conservation. A joint meeting with  
BBONT.

Saturday, 17th March,  
1984.  
Royal British Legion Hall,  
St. Mary Street, High Wycombe,  
from 7.30 p.m. to 11.30 p.m.

Barn Dance, with Wicked Willie's Barn  
Dance Band. Licensed Bar and Buffet  
supper.

Saturday, 24th March, 1984,  
to Saturday, 7th April, 1984,  
from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily  
except Sundays.

Society's Festival Exhibition - "A  
Walk down the River Wye from West  
Wycombe to Bourne End". To include  
exhibits depicting history of the  
river, natural history and  
environmental importance of the river.

Tuesday, 17th April, 1984.  
Royal British Legion Hall,  
St. Mary Street, High Wycombe,  
at 8 p.m.

Annual General Meeting.  
After the business part of the  
meeting, various District Council  
Chairmen of Committees will attend to  
answer questions about the town and its  
future.

Tuesday, 5th June, 1984.  
Royal British Legion Hall,  
St. Mary Street, High Wycombe,  
at 8 p.m.

Illustrated talk by Arthur Percival,  
M.B.E., FSA., of the Civic Trust -  
"Town Pride - or Shame?".

Thursday, 20th September,  
1984.  
Royal British Legion Hall,  
St. Mary Street, High Wycombe,  
at 8 p.m.

Steve Billcliffe, Director of the  
Friends of the Earth, will talk about  
the work and aims of the Friends of the  
Earth.

We hope to arrange a summer outing to the historic town of  
Thame, with a conducted tour of the old town. Further details  
in our next Newsletter.

Please make a note of these events in your diaries and try  
to give them your fullest support.

Ron Sims.