

HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

(Registered with the Civic Trust)

Registered Charity No. 257897

Hon. Secretary:
J. Scruton Esq.,
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NEWSLETTER NO. 59 SUMMER 1985

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting was held in the Royal British Legion Hall on Tuesday, 23rd April. The reports of the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer were distributed and accepted by the members, as were the changes proposed for the increase in subscription rates, details of which will be sent to all our members and affiliated Associations.

Tributes were paid to the work of Mr. Connor Wilson, our retiring President, and his wife Nancy. It was felt by all the members that the Society was suffering a great loss.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the Hon. Secretary could only serve for a limited period and that there was urgent need to find a successor. The problem would be eased if the Society could also find a Planning Secretary and Programme Secretary.

The following Officers and Committee members were elected.

Vice-Presidents: Miss Marjorie Nash and Councillor Mrs. K. Peatey, J.P.

Chairman: Mr. E. Kearney

Vice-Chairman: Mrs. E. Roe

Hon. Secretary: Mr. J. Scruton

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. K. Attack

Members of the Executive Committee:

Mrs. A. Woodward
Mrs. M. King
Mrs. J. Tully
Mrs. J. Abrahall
Mrs. A. Birks

Mr. R. Rippington
Mr. R. Sims
Mr. R. Lawson
Mr. B. Honess
Mr. J. Gore

A tribute was paid to Mr. M. Barnett for his work on the Committee. He now lives in Henley and has therefore had to leave the Committee.

After the business meeting, the Alexanders (Frances, Eric and Phillip) and their friends entertained with music and songs, and satirical verse - a pleasant contrast to the serious business which had gone before.

Ted Kearney. Chairman.



CIVIC TRUST

The Entertainer

(Rag Time Two Step)

-2-

SCOTT JOPLIN

Arr. and adapted by GUNTHER SCHULLER
Simplified Arr. by DAVID CARR GLOVER

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK.

MUSICAL EVENING.

This took place on 4th June, in the Oak Room, and was successful because of the valiant efforts of some of our members and the Wellesbourn Music Group. We invited a number of guests, and these were introduced by our President, Mr. Connor Wilson. He welcomed the first Environment Week and the fact that representatives of the Civic Trust were present. Councillor Sydney Goulborn, Chairman of the Wycombe District Council, Councillor Mrs. Betty Barratt our Town Mayor, and Ray Whitney, M.P., spoke about the need for a Society such as ours, which had earned a place in the local community.

During the course of the evening, our Chairman, Ted Kearney, presented on behalf of the Society a picture to Connor Wilson on his retirement. This was a picture of Pann Mill by Lorna Cassidy. The presentation was a tribute to Mr. Wilson's great work as President. A bouquet was presented to his wife, Nancy Wilson, for her wonderful support.

Another pleasant event was the presentation by the Midland Bank of a cheque for £500 to mark National Environment Week, the money to be used for the Pann Mill project. The cheque was presented by Ken Atack, the High Wycombe Midland Bank Manager, who is also our Treasurer.

Many people helped, but we would like to give special thanks to Lottie Kearney, Diana Stone, Barbara Rippington, Lesley Wasley and Pat Thacker for providing the food, and to other good ladies who made salads.

Our Master of Ceremonies, Roger Lawson, ensured that the evening ran smoothly, with his usual efficient and cheerful manner.

PROVISIONS.

Husbands, wives and children, from all parts of Wycombe,
Rushing to the Oak Room, on Saturday night,
With car loads of gateaux,
Lasagne and Crockery,
Garlic bread, tableware - my, what a sight!

Salads and pot plants, coming from the Bryants,
Covered in cling film, by the kitchen door,
With tables of cutlery,
Vinaigrette and puddings,

A hundred pats of butter - will we need some more?

Freshly-baked bread rolls, set out on tea trays,
Fresh fruit salad and small paper plates,
With bowls of trifle,
Beer, wine and cocktails,
M.P., Mayor and Members - all for you awaits!

"An Organiser".

(With apologies to John Masefield).

We mounted a small Exhibition in the Library, showing the various activities of the Society. This proved to be very successful, as it was eye-catching and could be studied in a very short time. We used our own screens and built a box-like structure after some hair-raising preliminaries, with parts of the structure unwilling to take part, and flying off in various directions. However, the determination of Elizabeth Williams, Myra King and Gerald White and the Library masking tape - triumphed in the end! Our thanks to Ivan Sparkes, Librarian, and his staff.

Annie Woodward.

(P.S. As she wrote the article, Annie was unable to mention her own very considerable contribution. Her persistence overcame many difficulties and ensured the success of the Musical Evening). Editor.



PANN MILL DISPLAY.

To coincide with the end of National Environment Week, Pann Mill was open to visitors on Monday, 6th May. A small exhibition was mounted with the aid of a screen from Marks and Spencer, and great interest was shown by the public and parties of schoolchildren. Brian Honess was most inspiring to the children, who learnt about their local heritage.

Myra King.

PANN MILL PROJECT.

Working parties are continuing, to erect a temporary workshop on the mill island, in which to restore machinery for the future milling process. Offers of volunteer labour would be most welcome. Please contact Roger Lawson (High Wycombe 28047) or Myra King (High Wycombe 23968).

Many thanks to Rita and Alan Hill in the kiosk adjacent to Pann Mill for providing concessionary refreshments for the workers.

I.C.I. (Paints) of Slough have kindly donated materials for the weather-proofing of the workshop. We are most grateful, as this avoids "dipping in" to the Pann Mill fund.

The Water Board's new channel was tested and found to give a sufficient flow of water to turn the wheel. Opening and closing the new sluice system was found to be difficult, heavy and a wet experience.

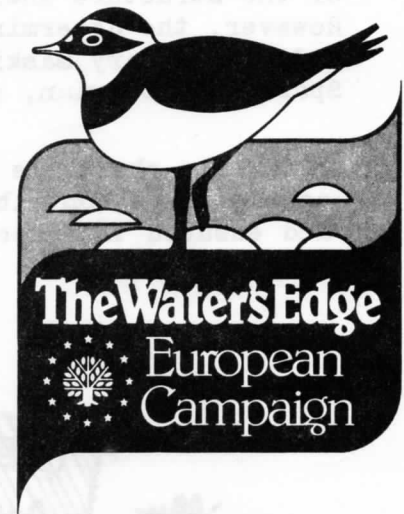
Myra King.

Water's Edge Campaign

During 1984 the Water's Edge Campaign was launched to stimulate interest in rivers, streams and other watery features, and in particular the banks and edges of these which are so vulnerable. We supported the campaign with our River Wye Exhibition, the Pann Mill project and the interest shown in our Water Trail.

The U.K. National Committee, wishing to show recognition and appreciation, has decided to award a Certificate of Merit to participants and one of them has been awarded to the Society. The organisers of the campaign hope that practical improvement schemes and projects will continue in 1985 and beyond, and we will continue to give our support in future.

J. Scruton



PLANNING

Green Hill

The Appeal against the Council's refusal to allow the planning application submitted by Jeanes Developments led to a Public Inquiry the result of which has been published recently. The Inspector considered that the environmental quality of the area and its significance for the beautiful Hughenden Valley was of greater importance than the submissions made by the developer, and he recommended a refusal. He states, "I have no reason to disagree with the opinion that it is the best unspoiled valley in the vicinity of the town, particularly as much of the earlier development of High Wycombe extended along the main valley that contains the London-Oxford Road." The Secretary of State agreed with his opinions and recommendation, and dismissed the Appeal.

We would like to congratulate Miss J. Thomas, Senior Assistant Solicitor of the Wycombe District Council for the way she presented the Council's case, and also her witnesses, Mr. Melvin, Mr. Frost, and Mr. Hennessy (County Engineer's Dept). A number of organisations supported the District Council, including the High Wycombe Society. We managed to be there throughout the week and feel that our efforts were of help to the Council. It was encouraging to see many local residents present and willing to speak. The Brands Hill and Green Hill Residents' Association, and many others, are overjoyed about the result, but also very conscious of the need for constant vigilance in the event of further attempts to develop the land.

The Inspector's report refers to the high level of permissions for employment-generating uses which add to the local need for housing, masked by under-occupation. The Council really must stop playing Father Christmas to speculators wishing to add to our stock of empty offices.

Jack Scruton

It's That Bus Station Again!

A cloud hangs over the Conservation Area, probably the darkest in its history - the Council's plan to build a bus garage, and on top of it a multi-storey car park, at the rear of the High Street.

What is planned is a large steel and concrete structure, about 50 feet high, visible from afar, an incongruous backdrop to the High Street and its listed buildings. By virtue of its size, height, and position, it would dominate the scene. Bus garages and multi-storey car parks are, by their nature and however well designed, most unattractive. They should be tucked away discreetly, and not displayed blatantly as the most conspicuous feature of a Conservation Area. Plans by the Prudential to build a rather smaller office block on the site were rejected (inter alia) on environmental grounds. What architectural merit appropriate to a Conservation Area does a bus station and multi-storey car park possess which an office block lacks? What is happening?

Do we need a multi-storey car park at the rear of the High Street? Leaving aside the thorny question of whether we need any more car parks, it seems clear that no one would have chosen such an unsuitable location, unless he was looking very hard for something to put on top of the new bus garage. There are admittedly few other things one can put on top of a bus garage.

Do we need a new bus station at the rear of the High Street? The answer is an emphatic 'No'. The present bus station at Newlands is better located than the new bus station would be. It was expressly planned as part of the Octagon Shopping Centre (which has the Main Post Office amongst its tenants) so that travellers could do much of the business under cover. Moving the bus station would disrupt this facility. Most of the shops and supermarkets are nearer to Newlands than to the rear of the High Street. The number of exceptions is relatively small. To move the bus station 'for the convenience of shoppers' would be standing the facts on their heads. The railway station would be marginally nearer to the High Street, but this is outweighed by the fact that Crendon Street (or Corporation Street) are so much steeper than Queens' Square and Castle Street.

The only point on which I agree with the Council is that the site at the rear of the High Street is at present 'under-utilised'. This offers a splendid opportunity to develop it in a way that would enhance the attractiveness of the Conservation Area. It would be ideal for some housing, offering well-secluded homes right in the town centre. It would be ideal for some well-designed, carefully chosen specialist shops, which are needed. There could be a river walk along the much abused Wye. It is a unique opportunity for imaginative development. This makes it doubly regrettable that the Council both want to throw away this opportunity, and moreover have chosen this very site to build, of all things, a bus station and multi-storey car park. Some clouds pass, and disperse. Let us hope that this one will. The High Society is doing its best to help it along.

Walter Kraft

Historic Buildings Group

Our Hon. Secretary at a recent meeting of the Society expressed concern that among other things the former Historic Buildings Group had not met for some-time, and to all intents and purposes was inactive. Now that the Wycombe History Society has been wound up, this appears to be an appropriate time to rekindle interest in Local History; to restart, and more particularly to widen the sphere of the Historic Buildings Group to embrace all aspects of Local History as well as the preservation of our heritage.

With this in mind, I would invite members to contact me by letter or telephone (evenings only) as to whether they would be interested in joining the new History and Heritage Group. With a small number we might initially meet at the home of a member and as membership grows and speakers are booked meet at the Friends' Meeting House.

Please contact me: Derek Woods, 19 Adelaide Road, High Wycombe, Bucks
Telephone High Wycombe 20284



Simon de Montfort (1209-65)

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Saturday 1st June 1985

Canal Trip. Now fully booked.

Tuesday 11th June 1985 in the Royal British Legion Hall, St. Mary St, High Wycombe at 8 pm.

Brian Williamson, Field Officer of B.B.O.N.T. will give an illustrated talk about B.B.O.N.T. and its Reserves.

Sunday 30th June 1985. Carnival Procession from Mill End Road to the Rye starting at 2.30 pm, with Fun Fair and stalls on the Rye afterwards.

Members of the Society will be taking part in the procession, and the Pann Mill site will be open to the public with stalls and refreshments for sale.

Friday 11th October 1985 in the Royal British Legion Hall, St. Mary St, High Wycombe at 8 pm.

Edward Cullinan, one of Britain's most famous architects, will give an illustrated talk.

GIFT FROM MR. L.J. ASHFORD

Mr. L.J. Ashford, author of the 'History of High Wycombe', has very kindly donated a mint copy of his wonderful comprehensive book to the Society in recognition of the 700 years of the town's Mayoralty and our exhibition in the Guild Hall in March. He has suggested that we may wish to sell it to raise funds for the Society, and he will sign it appropriately for its new owner. Second-hand copies of this book are fetching £30 plus, and if any member is interested in acquiring it, please contact Jack Scruton (Hon. Sec.) If it remains unsold, we may auction or raffle it at our next social function. In the meantime, we extend our warmest thanks to Mr. Ashford for his kind thought.