

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. 64 AUTUMN 1986

The Society is nearly 18 years old, so perhaps the time has come to assess the work we do and whether members could help to make this more rewarding and successful. Your committee has reached the conclusion that we have been on a plateau for some time - or perhaps it is really a gradual decline. Although we have more affiliated organisations than ever, we find it difficult to increase our membership.

This is apparently nothing unusual with voluntary Societies; nor is the problem of persuading members to pay their annual subs! Without a steady replacement of funds we cannot undertake the many tasks that are needed. From a survey of Society members, it is clear that we have a great array of talents, and that if we could make use of these we could make a greater and better contribution to the welfare of the community.

We need to reform some of the Groups we once had and to enlist aid to tackle a number of individual tasks to improve the efficiency of the Society. Here is a list of our needs and we hope that all our members will study this and help us to make the Society more active and successful. By taking a more active role members will themselves derive benefit in personal satisfaction and a feeling of helping others in our community.

1. Subs. Please respond to any reminders as soon as possible.
2. Secretarial Help Help needed, say once a week, in simple admin. work. The Society's office needs an efficiency drive!
3. Planning Two persons needed to form the nucleus of a group to tackle planning matters. Would suit two friends with some spare time during the day. Interesting and rewarding work. No experience required.
4. Members needed to start and develop the following groups.
A great deal of help will be provided:
 - a) Historic Buildings
 - b) Trees and Water

If you are able to help with these tasks or in some other way, however small, please inform the Hon. Sec. Help us to celebrate our 18th Birthday by becoming stronger and more active.

Roger Lawson
Chairman

SAVE THE VIADUCT

These pictures show views taken where the old viaduct crosses Temple End, High Wycombe. Having saved the old Intimate Theatre building in Frogmoor from a projected roundabout, road engineers from the County Council have decided to place it the other side of the main viaduct.

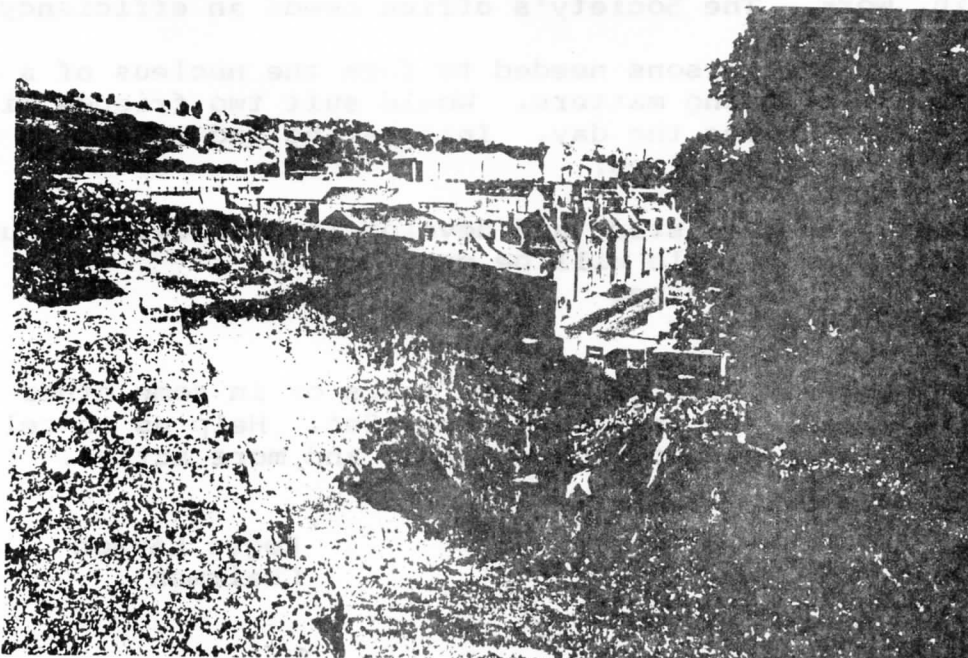
There is currently an enormous amount of construction work being carried out in this part of High Wycombe - new highway layout around the new Sainsburys and Payless stores, new car park for the Chiltern Shopping precinct, and new roads and 400 houses to be built on the hillside beneath Bellfield School. This will mean more people wanting to walk into town, so it is essential to provide pleasant and safe walkways.

The viaduct is already there, and although fenced off again, these pictures show it could be used for people to walk from Bellfields into the town centre. Footpaths already exist from Bellfields down to Bellfield Road - it should be possible to continue them along the line of the railway to the old viaduct, and so down to Priory Road.



I have been asked if there is a petition. Forms have been printed which I shall circulate in due course, and if you feel strongly about this, as I do, then please participate.

Lorna Cassidy





Planning

The number of planning applications submitted is for ever on the increase, and we are finding it difficult to respond to all those affecting our particular area of concern. We know that Parish Councils make very useful comments on applications within their own areas, but the bulk of the urban area lacks Parish Councils, and it remains for others such as this Society to make their voices heard. We urge all Residents' Associations to study the weekly Planning List, and to make their own representations to the Planning Officer concerning applications affecting their locality. These could prove to be very helpful to the Planning Department and the Planning Committee.

In our last Newsletter we described three significant applications. Here is the present position with regard to these.

Land off Rutland Avenue, Castlefield

This land, which has been earmarked for Old Persons' Dwellings has been the centre of a fierce argument about its use, having regard to its use as Public Open Space for children and its archaeological significance. The Ancient Monuments Commission has now included the land as part of Desborough Castle, which places it out of reach of the Council's plan, unless the Secretary of State takes the land out of the Schedule. It was heartening to read that a number of Councillors believe the Council should 'leave it alone'. To build on the land would be vandalism and would ruin the setting of the rest of the Castle. It is ironic that in the Draft Plan for High Wycombe the Council lays great emphasis on the need to protect our Ancient Monuments including Desborough Castle, and to ensure that their settings are not spoilt!

We support the need for Old Persons' Dwellings, but apart from the above reasons, the site is unsuitable for old people. It is bleak, the terrain is difficult, and it is somewhat isolated from essential facilities.

Hughenden Golf Course

The long struggle to change Church and Naphill Farms to a Golf Course came to a head on Wednesday 17th September, when the application was refused after a long debate. Approval had already been granted to enable some of the farm buildings to be converted for accommodation for visitors. The application for the Golf Course has caused a great deal of anxiety, discussion and correspondence, involving very large numbers of people. Frequent changes of plans have brought about great frustration and confusion. The applicant, Councillor Suter, may resume the struggle with further plans, and it is up to all those who care about this beautiful part of the Chiltern A.O.N.B. to be prepared for them.

Loakes Park

The attempt by Wycombe Wanderers to find a new ground at Sands refused because of Green Belt policy. This means that plans to make use of Loakes Park for other purposes have been put aside. We believe very strongly that any future use for the ground should be confined to hospital and other community uses, and that a large warehousing development should not be considered.

HIGH WYCOMBE AND DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

After much discussion a detailed response was submitted to the District Council concerning the Draft Local Plan. Although we agreed with the majority of the Policies proposed, there were a number which we could not support, and we give details of these as it is felt that our members and affiliated organisations should be aware of these differences.

Land for New Housebuilding

We expressed worries about the 'grim determination' of the Housing Committee to identify land for housing even if it has serious disadvantages. We expressed the hope that some land will be spared and used instead for much needed open space.

We supported the residents in the Wooburn Moor area in their strong opposition to the proposed housing at Harvest Hill, Hawks Hill and Kiln Lane. We agreed with them that extra housing would need considerable road improvements, and there would be widespread deterioration of what is now a most attractive area.

Although 'in-filling' within the urban areas can solve some of the local housing needs and avoids the use of open countryside, there is a danger of being too enthusiastic, leading to cramped conditions and possible social problems.

Re-location of Badly Sited Industries

Although we support the great need to relocate badly sited industries, we believe the choice of Green Belt land at Bourne End is an unsuitable one; apparently a large number of local residents think so too. This is a most difficult problem and unlikely to be solved without the miraculous discovery of suitable alternative sites.

High Technology at Gomm Road

We have opposed the use of this site for High Tech development in view of the appeal of the attractive Gomm Valley.

Offices

Although we support some aspects of this policy regarding office development, we have expressed our misgivings concerning speculative office development in the town centre. Many people believe as we do that housing would be a far better option to choose.

Rivers and Flooding

We hope that more public access to the River Wye can be achieved. We also hope, as so many do, that culverted stretches of the river can be rescued in the town centre.

Environmental Protection

The District Council is concerned about a number of areas and approaches to the town which have been labelled as 'fairly unattractive'. We consider some should be labelled 'hideous' and need urgent attention. The suggested help of local residents and businesses would be very welcome.

Ancient Monuments

Although we support the District Council's determination to protect Ancient Monuments and their setting, we fail to understand the Council's effort to build on land adjacent to Desborough Castle. This would have a very marked effect on the attractive setting of the Castle.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

We support the District Council's sound policies, but we hope that a larger sum will be allocated to the Historic Buildings Fund, which is used to help in the restoration of listed buildings. The present sum is miserly and has failed to keep in step with inflation.

Transport

We have again shown our strong opposition to the A404 Relief Road from Hazlemere to Temple End. The earlier proposals for this road met the fiercest possible opposition in view of the devastating effect it would have, but it has been retained by the County Engineer. Likewise he has kept the so-called Northern Relief Road from Temple End to the Law Courts. It is difficult to estimate the impact of this road from a study of the small scale map in the Draft Local Plan, but we are convinced that the road would cause havoc. It is supposed to be the cure for the town centre traffic problems, but we believe the 'cure' will be far worse than the disease. The County Engineer claims that we must have the road in order to have a traffic-free town centre and many people believe him, but we do not accept that he is infallible.

Junction Improvements

We support the various improvements which have been proposed, but we are very worried about the growing traffic problems of Cressex. If all the developments take place, the situation could easily become unbearable.

Retail Warehousing

We have expressed concern about the proposed extensive warehousing outside the town. We can understand the interest in the John Lewis Partnership wishing to establish themselves, but the site decided upon at Cressex could bring about great traffic problems and a great deal of discomfort for local residents. It seems that the lure of a quick profit for the District Council instead of the long-term welfare of the local community, was too much to resist. The most worrying aspect is that a decision appears to have been reached before public consultation of the Draft Local Plan.

Open Spaces

We expressed our great worry concerning the threat from the County Council to sell 100 acres of School Playing Fields, which may be needed a great deal in the future for the combined use of the Schools and the general public for recreation. We are also worried about the possibility of the District Council seizing Public Open Space and allotments for housing. We must not lose these valuable means of recreation.

The Town Centre

Although most of the Council's objectives are admirable, we think the provision of additional multi-storey car parks within the Conservation Area should be resisted.

We are concerned about the loss of any town centre housing. Although additional housing is proposed for part of Railway Place during the 5 years of the Plan, we have proposed that all the Car Park should be used, as was the original intention.

Frogmoor

Although some of the proposed developments are welcomed, we can see no reason why the Salvation Army Citadel should disappear. It is a sturdy, familiar buildings and has had much to do with our local history during the present century.

High Street - South

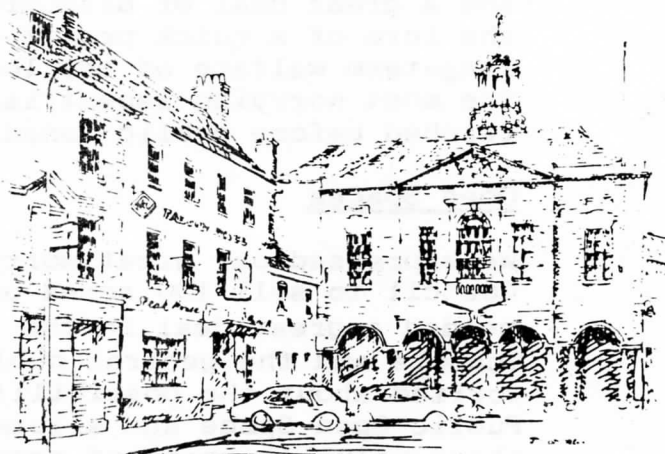
Although we support the use of this important site for Civic purposes, we question very seriously the need for another multi-storey car park and access road from the Abbey Way roundabout. We believe they would have a very serious impact on this crucial part of the Conservation Area. We support the provision of an Arts Centre, but oppose the destruction of our present library, together with the loss of the pleasant garden. In view of the importance of the site, we have suggested that it might be considered for an Open Competition.

Loakes Park

We support the future use of Loakes Park for hospital/residential use if a suitable venue is discovered for the football club, but we oppose the alternative use of part of the site for retail warehousing.

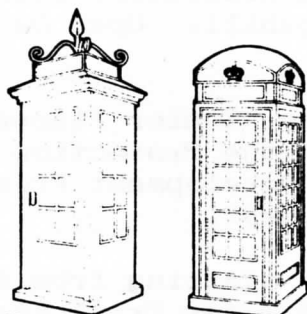
Pedestrian Priority Scheme

We support the need for this scheme, and hope this will be devised without the need for the Inner Relief Road. Certainly there is a need to experiment long before the fatal step is taken.



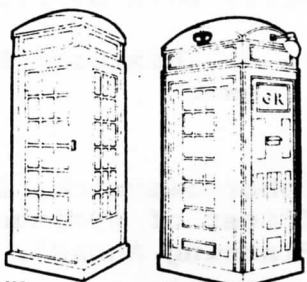
IT'S FOR YOU-HOO.....

.... not just the call on the transatlantic line, but the red telephone boxes are now being sent to distant lands, especially to America. This familiar landmark, easy to see by its bright colour and recognisable shape - recognition important when we want to communicate urgently - is disappearing fast, and being replaced by 'plastic shower cabinets' as Astrgal, of Architects Journal, calls them. However there is hope for some if eagle-eyed spotters will act quickly.



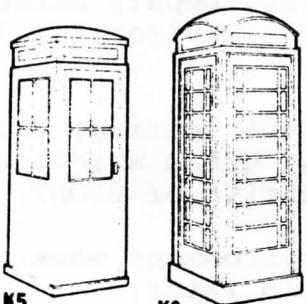
K1

K2



K3

K4



K5

K6

The DOE has now taken the brave step of placing a total of eight kiosks on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. One of these is a K1 model—the earliest type—dating from 1921, five are K2s dating from 1927, one is a K3 of 1929 and one is a K4 of 1930.

Eventually, the DOE boasts it will list up to '100 representative examples spread over the country'. No post-1939 kiosks are to be listed which means the vast majority of the jolly K6s are doomed to the scrap heap. The Thirties Society is, I understand, shocked by the Government's pusillanimous behaviour (it had talked earlier of listing thousands rather than hundreds) and points out that, by applying the 1939 rule, only telephone boxes in London will be protected in any number because, virtually all surviving K2s (the most common pre-1939 type) are in London.

Barbara
Rippington

Left, the
Architects
Journal report.

XX

Discovering High Wycombe

Following the success of our two walks in May, we plan to repeat them on Sunday 19th October.

The Town Trail will start at the Parish Church Porch with a short guided tour of the church, conducted by John Gore. We will follow the trail through parts of the Conservation Area, finishing at Pann Mill. Our own local history expert, Derek Woods, will be in attendance.

The Water Trail, led by Jack Scruton, begins at Pann Mill, crossing the Rye to look at the Dyke, the Back Stream and Bassetsbury before returning along the River Wye. Jack needs no introduction as an excellent environmental guide.

The trails start at 2.30 p.m. and should finish about 4 p.m. at Pann Mill, where refreshments will be available.

Both walks are delightful and full of interest. The groups who came in the spring were most enthusiastic and keen to try the alternative trail. Now is their chance! We hope many members and friends will come to enjoy a pleasant healthy afternoon out.

Annie Woodward
(and Barbara Rippington)



Priestfield Arboretum, Stony Lane,
Little Kingshill. Open Day, 10 a.m.
to 4 p.m.

Richard Bate, Senior Planner of
Council for the Protection of Rural
England - "Development Pressures
in South Bucks".

Town Trail, starting from Parish Church, and Water Trail starting from Pann Mill, both at 2.30 p.m.

Chris Wallis - 'Historic Buildings,
a personal view'.

Mr. Christopher Swanwick, Chief
Planning Officer of Wycombe District
Council, 'Planning Ahead'.

Brian Limbury, Deputy Director of the Civic Trust, 'Environmental Problems'.

Annual General Meeting, followed by a talk about Urban Wildlife sites by a representative of BBONT.

National Environment Week. Details to be advised later.

Chris Wallis

On Friday 14th November it will be our great pleasure to have Chris Wallis, son of Barnes Wallis the famous aeronautical engineer, to come and talk to us in the Friends Meeting House, London Road, at 8 p.m. Chris is an engineer by profession and has a passionate interest, combined with profound knowledge, in historic buildings. He is leader of the Chiltern Society Historic Buildings Group, and was the driving force behind the Chiltern Society restoration of Lacey Green Windmill, now in working order.

Modestly Chris disclaims any special attributes, claiming only a layman's knowledge and interest in historic buildings. 'Don't expect a learned discourse, I can only talk about what I have picked up and how I feel', he says. Those of us who have heard him talk on this subject know the depth of his modesty. We are confident this will be an inspiring and stimulating evening. Come along and bring your friends. There will be time for informal chat afterwards and those interested can discuss with us the formation of a Historic Buildings Group in the High Wycombe Society.

Barbara Rippington