

The High Wycombe Society

(Registered with the Civic Trust)

Newsletter

"Your town is our concern"

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



e are once again rapidly approaching the annual Christian Festival celebrating birth and committed re-birth in personal and religious terms. Inevitably, this Festival would not seem to have a direct link with a non-sectarian and non-party political body such as the High Wycombe Society.

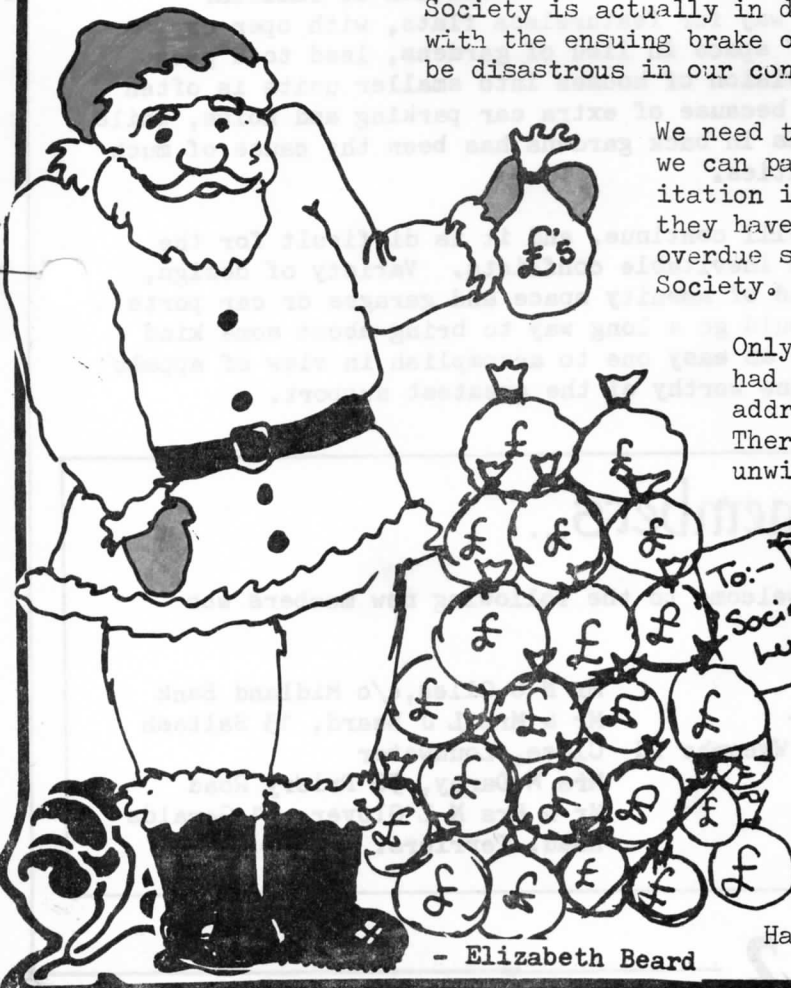
But lo ! There is an unexpected parallel to be drawn, for the Society is actually in danger of physical and economic decline with the ensuing brake on our activities that could, locally, be disastrous in our conservation work.

We need to start afresh with the knowledge that we can pay our way. Therefore, I have no hesitation in asking our members to recall whether they have recently received a reminder about overdue subscriptions, for the High Wycombe Society.

Only 33 per cent of overdue subscribing members had responded to our last, individually-addressed appeal, and stumped up the 'readies.' There are many on our membership list who are unwittingly playing the part of "Scrooge" to the Society's finances. Throw off the restraints of budgeted self control and give the High Wycombe Society the full benefit of your moral and financial support.

Pay up your overdue subscription and give your executive committee a well-deserved boost to start the New Year with a sounder financial base to support our varied activities and work. The Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year ! - Roger Lawson

- Elizabeth Beard





THE FUTURE OF HIGH WYCOMBE

By the time this newsletter reaches our members the future of our county and our town will have been discussed at the important Examination in public between 1st December and 8th December 1987. The discussion will deal with housing needs, the future of the Green Belt and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and future employment needs. The various participants, including the High Wycombe Society, hold widely different views, which is hardly surprising. The Society supports the vital need to protect the Green Belt and the AONB and emphasises the folly of allowing High Wycombe to spread further into the surrounding countryside. The Secretary of State for the Environment will decide on the future of our County and town but it will be some time before a decision is reached.

HOUSING IN HIGH WYCOMBE

There has been a very large increase recently in the number of applications to build houses within the present confines of the town. Most of the applications make use of existing properties and gardens. Large houses are being divided into smaller units, or demolished to make way for blocks of flats, or large back gardens are used for additional homes.

Although these developments take some of the pressure off the need to build on green field sites, they often carry with them their own problems, which are sometimes difficult to resolve. The demolition of familiar and attractive housing to make way for featureless flats, with open car parking and scraps of "amenity" space in lieu of gardens, lead to a great loss of character. The sub-division of houses into smaller units is often a great nuisance to neighbours because of extra car parking and noise, while the building of additional houses in back gardens has been the cause of much conflict within settled communities.

Clearly these developments will continue, and it is difficult for the District Council to resolve the inevitable conflicts. Variety of design, minimum density, gardens instead of amenity space and garages or car ports instead of open car parking, would go a long way to bring about some kind of harmony. This policy is not an easy one to accomplish in view of appeals and other problems, but it is one worthy of the greatest support.

Welcome to our new members...

The High Wycombe Society extends a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined recently:

Mrs K M Draper, 18 Kelvin Close
Mr & Mrs A F Johnson, Holmer Farm, Booker
Mrs D E M Chapman, 10 Birches Rise, West Wycombe Rd
Mr & Mrs S Cavarin 97 Guinions Road.
Mr P A Hazzard, 15 London Road

Mr N C Giles, c/o Midland Bank
Mr & Mrs L J Beard, 13 Saltash Close, Loudwater
Mrs M Darby, 50 Priory Road
Mr & Mrs N L Glover, 41 Gerald's Road, Terriers.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE from THE THAMES VALLEY POLICE and
THE WYCOMBE CRIME PREVENTION PANEL

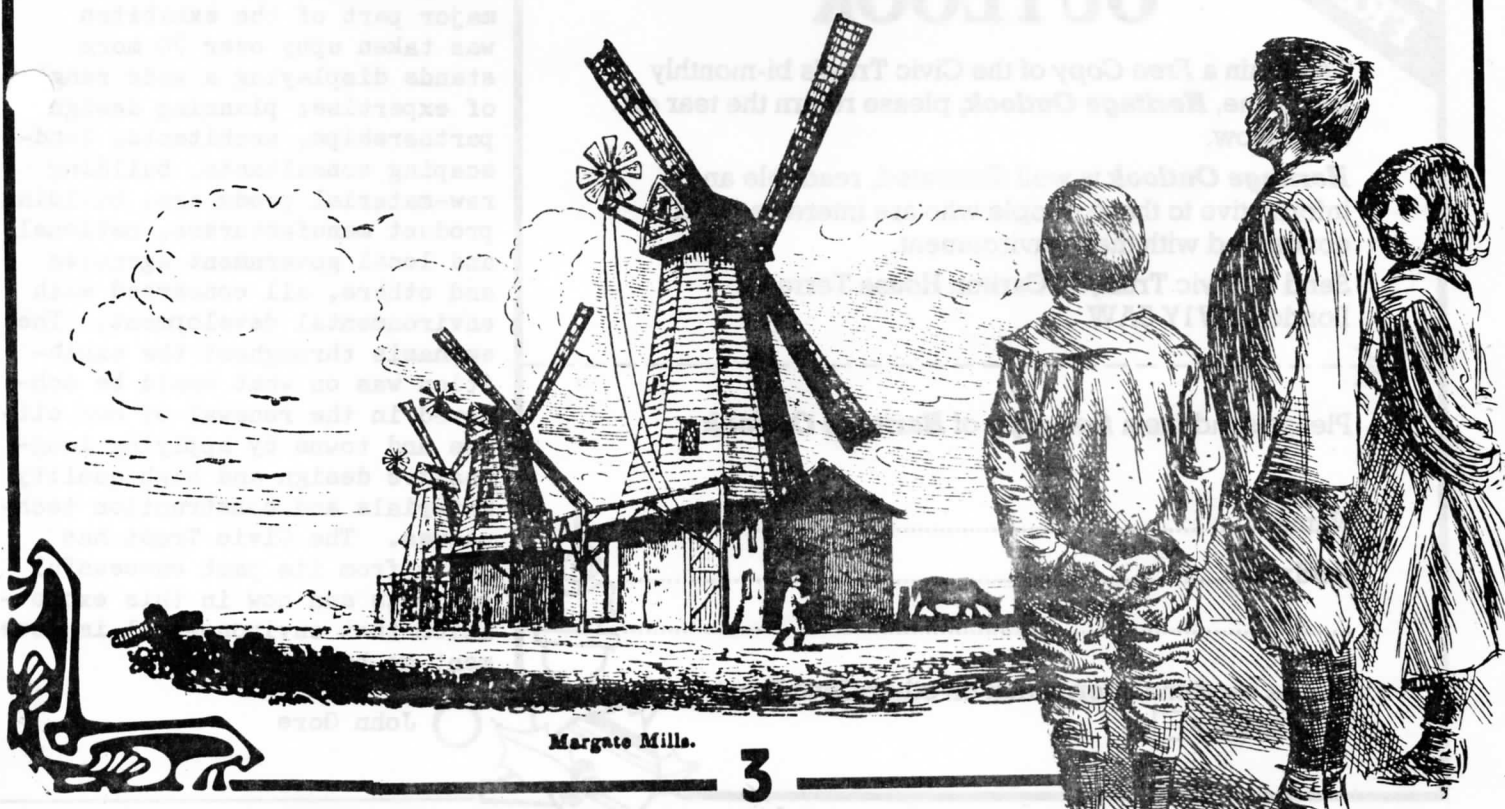


Who will get your Christmas presents ? Will it be your nearest and dearest or a thief taking advantage of a careless moment. A locked car will not prevent theft if the goods are in plain view. However busy you are, take time to lock presents in the boot, out of sight - never leave a handbag on the seat. And who will get your hard earned savings ? The shopkeeper in exchange for lots of lovely gifts or the thief taking his opportunity in the hustle and bustle of the crowds ? Don't leave your purse on top of your basket or, worse still, lay it on the counter. You had to work hard to get the money so don't give it away to a stranger. Going on holiday ? Please remember to cancel the milk and the papers. Ask a friend or neighbour to ensure no literature is sticking out of the letterbox. Try to ensure someone keeps a regular eye on your home and, if possible, turns on the lights occasionally.



On Thursday October 22, John Boyes took us on a world tour of mills in his stimulating talk illustrated by magnificent slides. We learned the history of mills and milling, that watermills date back to the 1st century BC and how the horizontal wheel appeared simultaneously in Asia Minor and in China although no one can explain why. Sceptical of the declaration from the High Commissioner of Cyprus that no mills existed in that country, Mr Boyes undertook a search ... and found evidence of 80 ! ... supporting his belief that if rivers ran mills appeared. He told how millstones are made and maintained, the best in this country coming from Derbyshire, and that sails are common or patent, and can number as many as six on one mill. We saw post mills, tower mills, smock mills, cap mills and a candlestick mill - and much more - and the talk was interspersed with readings illustrating how mills have been recorded in literature. Yet all this only briefly touched the subject. Mr Boyes clearly had much more to tell and infected with his enthusiasm we would have liked to hear more, but time ran out. Perhaps on another occasion...

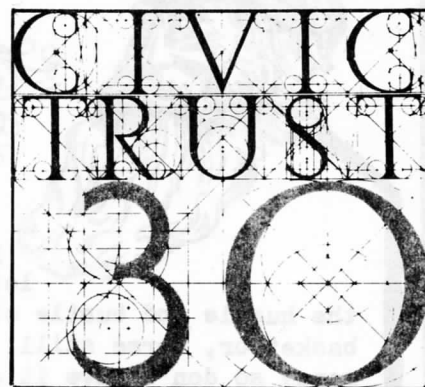
◆ Barbara Rippington



Margate Mills.



ow to celebrate the 30th anniversary of The Civic Trust? One answer was to mount an exhibition to illustrate the Trust's work of encouraging the protection and improvement of the environment, and to bring together organisations and businesses whose activities will have a powerful influence on how the environment is developed.



The exhibition entitled, *Building a Better Britain*, duly took place between the 1st and 3rd of October 1987 at the Business Design Centre in London, just down the road from the Angel, Islington. The Centre is itself a good example of the type of urban regeneration which the Civic Trust seeks to foster. It was originally built in Victorian times, about 125 years ago, as the Royal Agricultural Hall, a large, graceful iron, glass and brick structure. In its heyday it housed exhibitions, circuses and sporting events as well as agricultural shows. Then, like some other listed buildings, it was allowed to fall into disuse and dilapidation. Fortunately in the last few years it has been sensitively restored and put to new use as a permanent showcase for quality-designed products as well as for exhibitions and conferences.

The Civic Trust itself occupied a large display area at the exhibition to show examples of its past work and future plans, highlighting urban regeneration projects. Included were some of the activities of the 1000 or so local amenity societies of which the High Wycombe Society is one. Our own Pann Mill project was featured. In another part of the

hall, craftsmen and women were at work: sculptors, stained glass workers, stone masons, thatchers, joiners and so on, all sponsored by their County Councils, showing that buildings can be enhanced both inside and out by skillfully executed craft work. The major part of the exhibition was taken up by over 70 more stands displaying a wide range of expertise: planning design partnerships, architects, landscaping consultants, building raw-material producers, building product manufacturers, national and local government agencies and others, all concerned with environmental development. The emphasis throughout the exhibition was on what could be achieved in the renewal of our cities and towns by applying imaginative design and high quality materials and construction techniques. The Civic Trust has shown from its past successful projects and now in this exhibition that environmental improvement go hand-in-hand.

FREE TRIAL OFFER

HERITAGE OUTLOOK

To obtain a *Free Copy* of the Civic Trust's bi-monthly magazine, *Heritage Outlook*, please return the tear off slip below.

Heritage Outlook is well illustrated, readable and informative to those people who are interested and concerned with their environment.

Send to Civic Trust, 17 Carlton House Terrace,
London SW1Y 5AW



Please send me a *free copy* of *Heritage Outlook*

Name

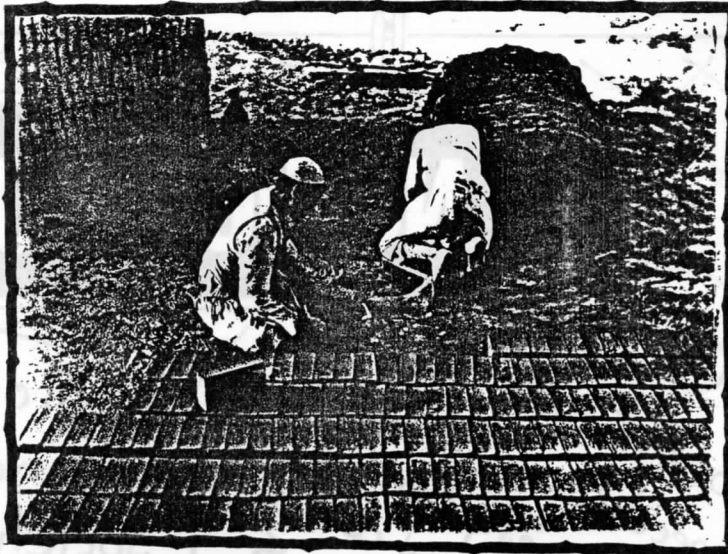
Address

Please send me information on other Civic Trust
Publications ☐



☐ John Gore

In praise of beautiful bricks



Mr Mike Hammet and Sir Winston Churchill have something in common: a passion for bricks. But I doubt Sir Winston could

have matched his knowledge of the subject with that of Mr Hammet which was displayed to us at the Friends' Meeting House on 18 September. I arrived (late, unfortunately) to find the room packed with a very attentive crowd of members of The High Wycombe Society, viewing Mr Hammet's tremendous collection of slides showing the manufacture of bricks and their uses over many centuries, one of the most interesting being the construction of the retaining wall by the railway line at High Wycombe Station. Did you know that it is the longest retaining wall in Europe? This fact was announced by Mr Hammet to the accompaniment of the cry "We should get it listed" from Mr Jack Scruton. How lucky High Wycombe is that the station was built long before anyone had thought of using pre-stressed concrete with all its horrors. Perhaps even Churchill's enthusiasm for building walls would have waned at the prospect of this one - a quarter of a mile long, ten feet thick at the base and six feet thick at the top.

Our appreciation and thanks to Mr Hammet for such an informative and entertaining evening, and we surely wish that he may long continue to spread the message about one of our most loved, enduring and attractive building materials.

♦ Judy Vince

Our picture, supplied by Jack Scruton, was taken in Iraq and shows the original system of manufacturing bricks.



Pann Mill Restoration



On the Saturday of the Wycombe Show in September, members of the public were invited to look round the Pann Mill site and appreciate the progress made over the past months. Despite a rainy start, we were happy to receive many enthusiastic people in the afternoon sunshine. Our workshop was open for inspection of the 48 painted paddles which were in various stages of completion. A third coat of paint has been applied to all of them, the last of which is a black bitumen coat. Work continues on a fortnightly basis, some Wycombe Society members inheriting the task of scraping out the oil and dirt of many years from the smaller wheels within the machinery.

The Pann Mill group has been given permission to purchase a new set of brass bearings, to be fitted before the final assembly of the wheel takes place. Unfortunately, the very fine willow tree which framed the new building, was blown over during the recent gales. No damage was sustained to the mill.

The committee are considering the planting of another tree on the site.

♦ Myra King



Our membership secretary is:-
Annie Woodward
20 Coningsby Road
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP13 5NX.

NOTICE BOARD

Lots of little jobs need doing to help the Society that take little effort and no time. Join our team of volunteers by giving Annie Woodward a call on HW.27978.

More members are needed for the Society's small groups. If you want to make a more positive effort to help the Society and the town, let Jack Scruton know.



HELP!
is needed in collating and stapling the newsletter. It's a fun way to spend an evening! Write or phone Jack Scruton if you can help.
HW 25933

The offer of a lifetime!
Someone is needed to tidy Jack Scruton's office. He promises to keep you well supplied with tea or coffee during your campaign!

LET ME KNOW IF YOU WANT SOMETHING 'PINNED' ON THE NEWSLETTER'S NOTICEBOARD! - Alan Cleaver
65 AMERSHAM ROAD, HIGH WYCOMBE.



Ted Kearney : Chairman

1972 ~ 1986



any members of the Society have asked that something should be done to mark Ted's long and devoted service to the Society and this desire was confirmed at the recent Annual General Meeting. Ted had been associated with the Society since its inception and before that with the Rye Protection Society, being one of that band of stalwarts who protected the Rye from the intrusions of an Inner Relief Road.

His time as Chairman saw the Society respond to many major environmental issues including:

- ◆ Wycombe Area Transport Study 1974
- ◆ Wycombe Area District Plan 1975
- ◆ The Old Chequers
- ◆ European Heritage Year
- ◆ Harmonisation of lorry weights: EEC
- ◆ County Structure Plan 1977
- ◆ Examination in Public 1983
- ◆ High Wycombe Area Local Plan

and many more lesser issues and his knowledge and contribution was always constructive.

His contributions to the various exhibitions staged by the Society was rarely fully known. Of particular note were the working models of Pann Mill, a project in which he was keenly interested and involved. The newsletter regularly carried Chairman's observations which were informative and pertinent.

Of course, in the summary of Ted's work with the Society we include Lottie whose support and assistance was constant.

In our desire to mark his unequalled contribution to the local environment and heritage as a first step we plan to plant an appropriate tree on the Pann Mill site. Perhaps the willow knew it was time to make way ! But we should also like to do something more and suggestions from members are needed. Will you please send your contributions and ideas to me, the undersigned. Cheques should be made out to the High Wycombe Society Ted Kearney Appeal please. We would like this to be a fitting reminder of a very good and generous man.

- ◆ Evelyn Roe, Vice-chairman

ENVIRONMENT WEEK



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL AFFILIATED SOCIETIES:



Are you proud of your locality? Is there an eyesore in your area? Have you often thought "Why doesn't someone do something about it?" Have you a tree requiring attention? Or perhaps a site requiring a tree or a seat? Your local footpath may need clearing - maybe your group can organise a walk along it. The local shop may need to provide a more adequate litter bin. The list is endless...

It is not too soon to be thinking along these lines in preparation for the Civic Trust's annual National Environment Week from 23rd April to 2nd May 1988. Last year some of our affiliated societies made an important contribution with schemes to improve their local area.

PLEASE CONSIDER HOW YOUR GROUP CAN HELP

If every affiliated society tackled just one local environmental problem, the overall result would be significant and everyone would benefit.

◆ Annie Woodward

23 April – 2 May 1988

When you have finished reading this newsletter please pass it on to a friend or neighbour - it may encourage them to join or get involved with the Society.

First Class Service

Have you ever wondered who delivers your newsletter? If you don't get it by regular mail you may have been just a little puzzled as to why it is hand delivered.

It is thanks to our team of volunteer postmen and postwomen who save the Society a fortune in postage.

Our thanks to them for their hard work. And if you want to join them you would be most welcome.

Faces at the windows

Julia Bolden has lived here less than a year but in her post as Community Arts Development Worker for High Wycombe has caused quite a stir and buzz of interest. She is employed by Bucks Arts Association and based in Wycombe District Council's Leisure Offices. Her brief is to promote active involvement in all kinds of arts activities among the people of Wycombe.



One of my projects is to set up an event in March 1988 during the Wycombe Arts Festival. The theme of this event is "The Many Faces Of Wycombe" - a title suggested by historian Ivan Sparkes. It is about our town and our people; their memories of how Wycombe used to be when cows walked down the High Street or when the muffin man rang his bell; or of how they first came to live here and how different it seemed to life in London, St Vincent, Pakistan, Poland, the North of England or wherever. These reminiscences might be portrayed through static display - photos, poems, diary entries, transcripts of interviews - through performance of dance drama or music; through demonstrations of traditional crafts, or through visual arts media such as paintings, drawings, collage or applique.

Whatever your particular interest or suggestion I would be pleased to hear from you.

Contact Julia at 8-9 Easton Street, High Wycombe or on HW 461000 x 3141 (office hours). Please also get in touch if you would like to receive a copy of her newsletter or find out about other aspects of her work in Wycombe.

Greetings from your new newsletter editor!

It was both an honour and a rather frightening prospect to be offered the post of editor of the newsletter for The High Wycombe Society. It is well known as a friendly, informative and important publication so to continue that high standard is quite a task. However, I am assured of the support and help of members in the Society so hope that together we can go from strength to strength. There are many pleas for volunteers in this newsletter so forgive me if I also make one. I would like to build up a small team of writers, artists and sub-editors (those involved in lay-out design and production) around the newsletter so that the Society can continue to be proud of the publication and show off the good work of Pann Mill, observation of planning applications and other projects to the full. I hope some of you out there share my excitement at being an active member of the Society and come to my aid! - Alan Cleaver, 65 Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 5AA.



Future Programme

Saturday 27 February '88
to Saturday 26 March

Wycombe Arts Festival to include contributions from the High Wycombe Society. See also Julia Bolden's article in this issue.

Saturday 27 February '88

The High Wycombe Society will have a stall in the Town Hall depicting the work of the Society as part of the Leisure 88 Exhibition

23 April ~ 2 May '88

National Environment Week - see the article by Annie Woodward in this issue.

Tuesday 22 March '88

Miriam Moir of The Chiltern Open Air Museum will be giving a talk entitled, A Year in the Life of the Chiltern Open Air Museum. The illustrated talk will be in the Oak Room of the Town Hall at 8pm.

April '88

Well-known personality Alice Coleman, Professor of Geography at London University and scourge of the planners will be giving a talk to the High Wycombe Society at 8pm in The British Legion Hall, St Mary Street, High Wycombe. In her articles she has highlighted the grave mistakes of planners in the past and campaigns for the proper use of land. She also campaigns for homes with gates, fences and front doors ! Not to be missed.

