

The High Wycombe Society

(Registered with the Civic Trust)

Newsletter

"Your town is our concern"

Honorary Secretary,
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Registered Charity No. 257897

Newsletter No ~~70~~ Christmas 1988
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SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Heritage Group:-



The application to change the Falcon to retail premises and speculative offices, which was recommended by the Planning Officer, was greeted with mixed feelings by the Planning Committee. It was decided to have a site visit and to have further discussions. We have made the strongest

possible representations about the need to keep the hotel, and the Chiltern Society and others are convinced that it should be kept. The reasons which we have submitted are numerous, but the principal ones are:

1. The architectural importance of the building.
2. The long history of the Falcon Hotel over a period of 600 years.
3. The growing need for a hotel in this unique position.

We will continue our opposition to the application and in this we hope to have the support of all our members and affiliated societies.



Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

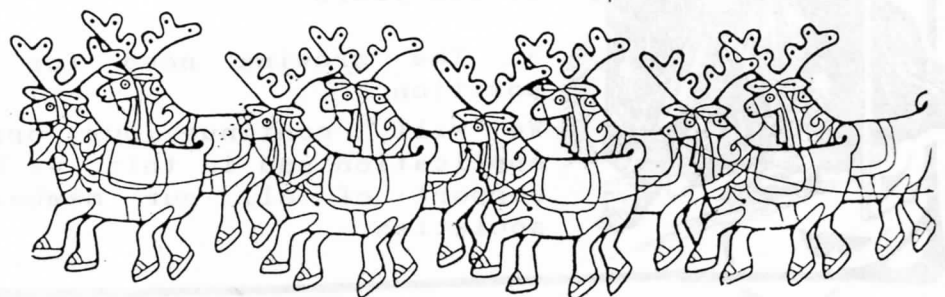


The Chairman and the Executive Committee wish all members of the Society a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This year of 1988 has seen a turning point in public awareness of environmental issues. Leading national and international personalities have publicly expressed their concern about the quality of our urban landscape and, even more important, fears for the future of life itself on this planet. From a recent Gallup Poll published in the *Daily Telegraph* it is clear that a growing percentage of the public is extremely concerned about such global matters as the greenhouse effect, poisoning of the environment and man's destruction of nature, as well as about more local issues like excessive traffic and damage to the landscape. As we are well aware, all this does not mean that the battle is anywhere near won; this is only "the end of the beginning". There is still much for the High Wycombe Society to do in this part of the world to work for enhancement of the local environment, both natural and man-made. Let us take advantage of the changing climate of opinion in 1989, our 21st birthday year, to increase our membership, combat apathy and win more support from the people of High Wycombe.

WYCOMBE URBAN WILDLIFE GROUP

It is good to know that an urban wild life group has just been set up in High Wycombe on the initiative of the Nature Conservancy Council and BBONT (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalist's Trust). The new group will be active in promoting nature conservation and get involved in practical work in the urban environment. An added bonus is that the group will receive support from Wycombe District Council. The next meeting of the group will be on 10 January 1989 at 7.15pm in the main lecture theatre at the Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education. All interested are invited to attend.

John Gore



Planning :-

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The Stewart and Arnold factory :-



This well known factory in Temple Street is to close in the Spring and an application has now been made to substitute a large office block, together with a workshop. The Society had already proposed to the District Council that the site should be used for housing and specialist shopping, and we are opposing the speculative office proposal. High Wycombe has now become infested with office blocks and it is time to call a halt. The Stewart and Arnold factory took the place of housing, and it seems a good opportunity to bring back people into the town centre.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



The number of applications to build on back land within the town show no sign of slackening. At a recent meeting of the District Council Planning Committee it was very evident that our councillors are now alarmed about the relentless destruction of the character of the town. Particular attention was made of the serious deterioration in the London Road and the growing threat to Kingsmead Road.

Although the use of large gardens can sometimes provide satisfactory homes within the urban area, it seems that the situation in High Wycombe has become alarming, with the destruction of family homes, loss of gardens to open car parking, and very cramped and lifeless developments.

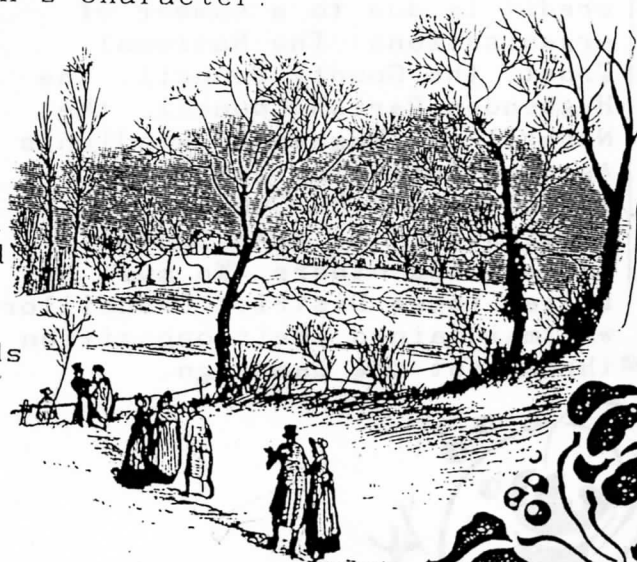
The Planning Officer, in considering recommendations to the committee, is ever mindful of the spectre of appeals to the Secretary of State by developers and the increasing success of these appeals. The recent approval of in-appropriate housing in the Green Hill area has left a mood of despair.

We will continue to support the Council in its efforts to preserve what remains of the town's character.

Jack Scruton

The Ozone Layer :-

If you are concerned about the effect on the atmosphere of aerosols containing CFC gas, send for a booklet, The Aerosol Connection - a guide to non-CFC aerosols. It costs £1 from Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ.



Hughenden Golf Course Inquiry

The decision by the Secretary of State to refuse the application to build a golf course at Church and Naphill Farms in the Hughenden Valley is most significant for the protection of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is a most welcome relief for all those who struggled for so long to protect this historic valley.

The Inspector concluded that the landscape quality of this part of the Hughenden Valley compared with other approaches to High Wycombe, is exceptional: "The setting, mostly comprising parkland and farmland surpasses the scenic value of land I would personally expect to find on the immediate periphery of a town in this part of England."

There were other reasons, of course, for rejection of a golf course. Walkers using the attractive footpaths would be threatened, there would be the impact of an ugly open car park, and the introduction of the proposed landscaping would be alien and most damaging to the sensitive nature of the valley.

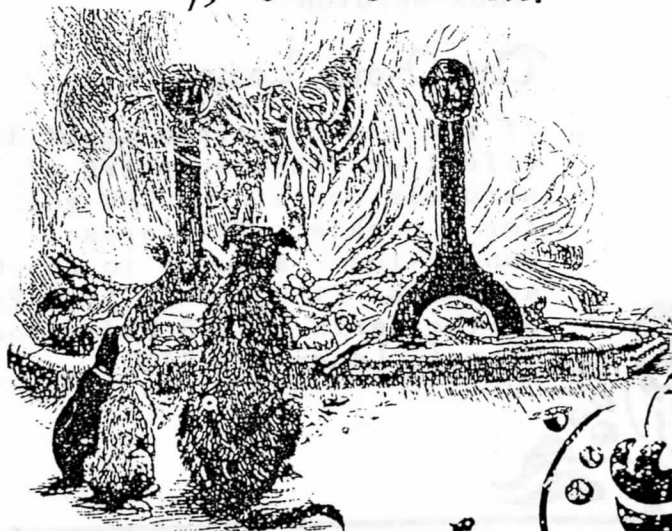
The Society was involved from the beginning of the struggle, but credit is due to a number of organisations: The National Trust, the County Council, the Hughenden Parish Council, the Naphill and Hughenden Residents Associations, the Ramblers Association, the Countryside Commission, the Open Spaces Society and others. We must not forget those District Councillors who maintained their opposition throughout the campaign.



Dear Friends,

At the meeting of the Society on October 11th, I was probably the only person who was unaware of what was to follow! I felt overwhelmed by the kind words of Mr Mayes, our president, by the delightful gifts to myself and my wife, Olive. The work of Secretary has been rewarding in so many ways, not least in working with so many delightful people concerned in such a positive way with our town.

Sincerely, Jack Scruton.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Since the Lady Verney girls moved last Christmas to their new home in the former Wellesbourne School, many people have been wondering about the future of the old school. We feel that this interesting Edwardian building should be retained as part of our local history. It was the town's Girls' High School until the new school was provided 20 years ago on the top of Marlow Hill, and the building is looked upon with affection by many people. It is a worthy candidate for listing. Like the old school at Spring Gardens, built about the same time, it could have an interesting future to provide some kind of community service, combined with Arts and Crafts and as an adjunct to the proposed entertainment centre behind the High Street.

LORNA CASSIDY

THINK GLOBALLY - ACT LOCALLY : UK 2000

Along with many other people, I had often wondered what had become of Richard Branson's Clean Up Britain Campaign, and those of us who attended the October quarterly meeting came away much enlightened after listening to guest speaker Amanda Jones, a project officer with UK 2000.

This organisation, of which Richard Branson is now President, operates as a partnership between British Industry, voluntary organisations and the Government, and aims to improve the environment by encouraging involvement and a sense of pride in our surroundings.

UK 2000 believes that small scale local work is the best way to tackle some of the worldwide problems about which we hear, and hopefully care, so much these days, such as litter, the effect on the ozone layer, or pollution.

In other words, we can all do something. As UK 2000 has it - Think Globally, Act Locally. Amanda illustrated the theme with several interesting slides, and outlined the five main aims of the organisation which are:

often involving schoolchildren seeing wildlife habitats for the first time.

☀ Restoring our industrial heritage

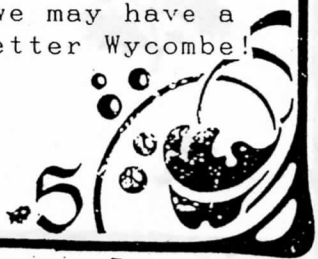
☀ Helping tourism. For example at Weston-Super-Mare, a typical victim of changing trends in holidays, a derelict warehouse has been converted to a Heritage Centre.

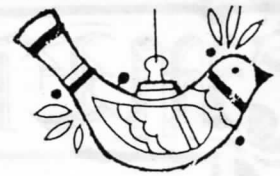
☀ Making more of nature, for example, by improving woodlands, footpaths, etc.

☀ Recycling. This is an environmental education project.

There are certain conditions which must be met regarding all these projects. Work must be of a high standard, projects must be properly planned, designed and managed. Unemployed people are given work, and volunteers are "used". After this most informative and thought-provoking talk, Amanda answered questions. Frances Alexander proposed a vote of thanks and suggested that the High Wycombe Society could maybe carry out a project of their own. (Don't forget the Pann Mill project which is already underway! - Ed) Hopefully come the Millenium, we may have a better world and a better Wycombe!

~ Denise Lindsay





On a beautiful Sunday afternoon in mid-September, a party of members and friends, under the watchful eye of Derek Woods, set off for the Chiltern Open Air Museum at Chalfont St Giles and their special Crafts weekend.

The usual warm welcome awaited us, and we were quickly attracted by the blazing fire of the wheelwright and the ring of the blacksmith's anvil in the old Garston Barn. A few plants and a pot set some of us up for the Spring, and then we made our way to see the beautifully-made working spindles of the spinners, with a diversion to take up an offer by the miller of freshly ground flour in suitable small quantities!

Further on, the marvels of textile dyeing were being explained, and we were able to see and handle woad, no longer a mysterious Ancient British substance from the history books. Examples of beautiful Bucks bricks, including many *specials*, followed, and then one was attracted to yoke makers, walking stick makers and bookbinders in the Hill Farm and the Marsworth Barns. On we proceeded to the highlight of the visit for High Wycombe folk, the old Toll House, looking far smarter than most of remember it when it stood by the Cricket Ground. The beautifully restored building was graced by the presence of lace makers, who patiently showed us how simple it was! Outside in the late summer sun, a volunteer was waging a one-woman war with the rabbits over the cottage garden being created by the side of the Toll House. Then on to the restored Elliott's Furniture Factory being temporarily used as a restaurant. How welcome was the tea, delectable eatables and conversation, for me made even more enjoyable by being shared with Marjorie Nash, one of our Vice-Presidents!

Some managed to fit in a meander along the nature trail and explore some of the other historic buildings, which have been or are in process of being reconstructed, but all too soon it was time to board the coach and return to the everyday world. Thank you, Derek, for another most enjoyable outing.

Evelyn Roe

Swan song for the Swan?

Do you think the Society "swan" logo is getting old in the tooth? Does it need replacing to update our image as we enter our 21st year? Please let me know what you think and, if you have any ideas for a new one, send in a rough sketch for the Executive Committee to consider. It ought to be with me at 30 Wordsworth Road by the end of January 1989, please. Any new logo should be original, of simple concept, instantly recognisable as belonging to the Society and should convey to the viewer something of the aims of the Society, which briefly are to encourage high standards in our local environment, both townscape and landscape. Finally, of course, the design should be open to the Society to use without charge. Here are a few existing logos. Can you recognise them? Answers on page



A



B



C



D

Christmas The Way It Was In Wycombe



Twice in recent weeks High Wycombe Society members have been delighted by evenings about old Wycombe.

Our President, John Mayes, spent the first reminiscing about the characters he had known when he first arrived as a Junior Librarian, and we chuckled through the evening as they came to life one by one, with their Bucks accents and their down-to-earth attitude to life and living. His collection of tape recordings, on which his talks are based, are a living record of a past lifestyle.

Derek Woods entertained us with his slides the second evening. He has ferretted around old magazines and manuscripts, both in the neighbourhood and the British Museum, to put together a priceless set of slides, and we wallowed in nostalgia as we saw the old scenes of Wycombe as she used to be. Wycombe from Marlow Hill, viewed down a grassy verge with Wycombe Abbey surrounded by fields; Marsh Green Mill's millpond - now filled in because of a surfeit of frogs and rubbish; Aldridges, the butcher's shop, rabbits, and geese; the High Street as it has changed over the years; the old Grammar School...

Now the invasion of the car and the car park, and municipal and commercial vandalism have overwhelmed us. We must have more appreciation of the past, as only then can the people who decide what is to happen to our town deal with it sensitively.

We are grateful to these two members for sharing their enthusiasm with us and enriching us.

~ Frances Alexander

Presentation to Jack Scruton

Jack Scruton was completely nonplussed when, at the end of the October Quarterly Meeting, John Mayes, our President, stepped forward and began to praise him for his unique contribution to the High Wycombe Society as its one and only Honorary Secretary since the Society's foundation 20 years ago until his retirement last April, and prior to that as a leading member of the Rye Protection Society. In his eloquent and entertaining way, Mr Mayes exactly expressed the feelings of members in thanking Jack for his many years of dedicated service. He then went on to present Jack with gifts subscribed for by many members and friends of the Society: an electronic typewriter (remembering that Jack is still a very active Planning Secretary), an illustrated book on the history and art of Florence (a favourite city of Olive and himself), and a case of wine. There was also a flower arrangement for Olive.

Jack, in thanking the meeting, said he was still recovering from the shock of receiving such a tribute, and was amazed that it had successfully been kept a secret from him. He in turn paid compliments to Mr Mayes and Derek Woods for their part in winning the battle of the Rye in the 1960s.

Jack has now written to thank all those who contributed to his retirement present:

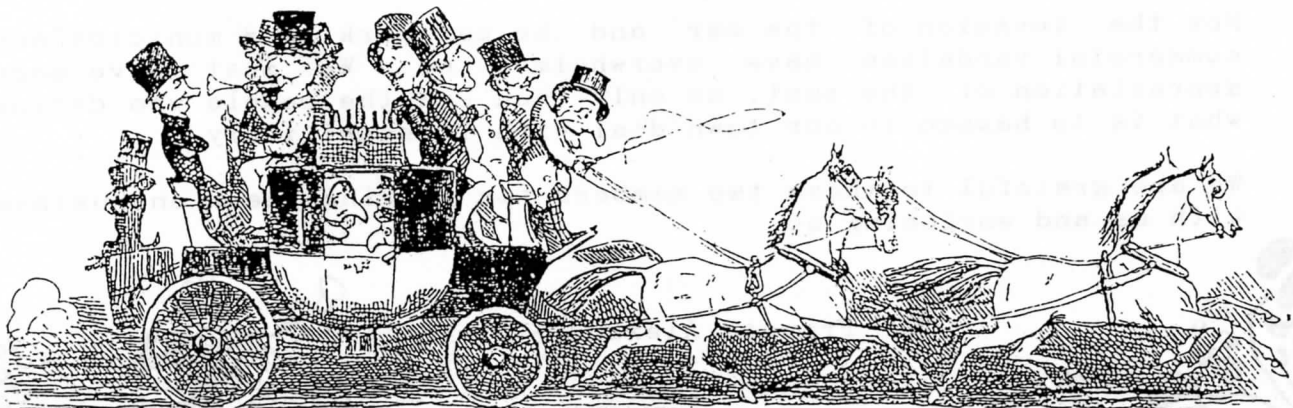
John Gore

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE WYCOMBE DISTRICT CRIME PREVENTION PANEL

Most of us look forward to Christmas, the season of goodwill. Unfortunately, a small section of the community look forward to Christmas for different reasons. It's a time of easy pickings for the thief. Shops are crowded with people who may be carrying more money than usual, so don't leave your purses, handbags, wallets, even shopping bags unguarded for even a few seconds.

If you are planning to be away from home over the festive season, do remember to cancel milk and papers, and, if you have a friend or neighbour who can keep an eye on the house, so much the better. It is quite true that a determined burglar cannot be kept out, but at least we can make things as difficult as possible for him.

Should you see something suspicious, contact the police immediately. They won't mind if it turns out to be a false alarm. Telephone Aylesbury 395010, the operator can then connect you with the police station of your choice, or, of course, in an emergency, dial 999.





Thank
you
to the
Posties

On Friday October 7 there was an extra curricular affair for the High Wycombe Society. One of the committee members, at an earlier meeting, had suggested that the Newsletter Postpeople (who had been delivering the Society's information four times a year regularly) could be thanked by way of a party.

As two of the postmen involved, it had not occurred to us that we needed thanking, because it is only a small part of the work of the Society. However it's very nice to be appreciated so off we went to Bassetsbury Manor. We were given a warm welcome by Mr Gore and the Committee, and thanked by the Chairman, Mr Lawson.

Wine was put into our hands and we met our fellow foot sloggers. An excellent buffet was laid on, produced by Joan Gore, Lottie Kearney, Myra King, Peggy Phillips, Olive Scruton, Janet Tully and Annie Woodward, and was much appreciated. A musical background was provided by Pat Abrahall.

We were able to talk and forget about the serious side of the Society's affairs for an evening. We enjoyed our party and thank all who were concerned in it. An original suggestion proposed, agreed and acted upon, made the Postmen happy and will be remembered on our rounds for a long time.

Rita Belson.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following
new members:

- * Mr and Mrs A Leaser
7 Pretoria Road, High Wycombe
- * Mr C Atkins
11 Suffield Road, High Wycombe
- * Miss J R Baldwin and Mr W Edwards
c/o 37 Clapton Approach
Wooburn Green
- * Miss K Bird
18 Queen's Court, High Wycombe
- * Mrs J Johnson
35 Dean Close, High Wycombe
- * Mrs P Meek
Mill Barn, Bassetsbury Lane
High Wycombe

Affiliated Society:

- * Social and Liberal Democrats
High Wycombe Branch
Secretary: Mrs Marie Burnard

TED KEARNEY MEMORIAL

A hornbeam, a maple and an oak, species he would have chosen himself, were planted on the Rye on 3 December during National Tree Week as a memorial to Ted Kearney, our much-loved former President and Chairman, who sadly died last year. After a tribute to Ted by our current Chairman, Roger Lawson, the planting ceremony was well and truly started by Lottie Kearney with some determined shovelling of earth, and completed with the help of other Society members and friends, including President John Mayes and Vice-President Kathleen Peatey.

The trees, subscribed for by members, are sited along the path from the Health Centre and Pann Mill. The hornbeam is nearest the mill, which is appropriate, as its wood is traditionally used for mill cogwheels.

John Gore

Pann Mill

On Sunday 20th November for the first time this year the Pann Mill group were unable to work because of a fall of snow and freezing rain. Each Sunday fortnight during the summer and autumn the helpers have passed a happy few hours in each other's company.

Before the full weight of buckets could be fixed to the frame, a new supporting girder was fitted to replace the old cracked one. Each paddle has to interlock with its two neighbours on the frame. However, the bared frame, stripped for over 12 months had relaxed, and presented the refitting as a real challenge. When a small number of buckets had been fitted, the wheel was revolved and the same number

applied to the opposite side, thus balancing the wheel. Almost half of the buckets are in place. Whilst the focus of attention is the wheel, other members are busy with different aspects of the Pann Mill site. Colin Adams is relaying a York stone path (on the north bank of the stream) which was unearthed in 1984. Ian Stone has erected a work bench in our workshop and Margaret Simmons is our devoted gardener. She can be seen in all weathers weeding and planting on the site. In Spring 1989 we should see a much improved landscape after 18 months of work.

Lastly, plans have been made to erect a signboard giving a brief history of Pann Mill, a much needed addition to the area.

Myra King

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 10 January 1989 7.30pm
at Main Lecture Theatre
Bucks College of Higher Education

Wycombe Urban Wildlife Group

Thursday 19 January 1989 8pm
at Royal British Legion

*Landscaping in High Wycombe
Town Centre, C D Royffe,
Landscape Design Associates,
Peterborough*

Tuesday 21 February 1989 8pm
at Trinity URC church hall

Heritage Group: *Wild flowers in
High Wycombe and district, Dr A J
Showler*

Saturday 22 April - Monday 1 May

National Environment Week

Thursday 27 April 1989 7.45pm
at Royal British Legion Hall

Annual General Meeting, followed
by *Wild life in the Wycombe area*
Maurice Young, BBONT

Thursday 22 June 1989 8pm
at Royal British Legion Hall

*The Future of Leisure in High
Wycombe, W N Roberts, Leisure
Manager, Wycombe District Council*

Thursday 5 October 1989 8pm
at Royal British Legion Hall

Open Spaces of Britain
Kate Ashbrook, Open Spaces Society

MERRY

CHRISTMAS