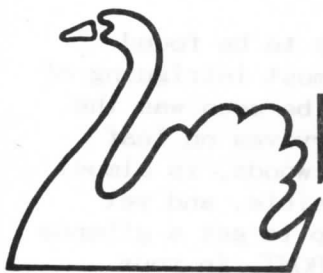


The High Wycombe Society

(Registered with the Civic Trust)



Newsletter

Your town is our concern

Hon Secretary:
John Gore
30 Wordsworth Road
High Wycombe
Bucks

HW 26671

Registered Charity No. 257897

Issue Number 73

Summer 1989

High Wycombe Society gets set for 21st celebration

COME and meet your fellow members in celebrating the Society's twentyfirst birthday in November. There will be a special celebratory evening in the Oak Room Suite, Town Hall, on Friday 10 November at 7.30pm for 8pm until 11pm. Come and participate in the buffet meal, in cutting the birthday cake, and in drinking a toast to the Society's achievements and to its future success. We look forward to hearing some amusing and appropriate comments from our President, Mr L J Mayes. There will be a jazz group to make music for our enjoyment; for dancing or just for listening. The bar will be open throughout the evening.

All members are warmly invited. Tickets are available price £7 form all Executive Committee members (see list under AGM report on page 2). We look forward to seeing you there.



21st Anniversary Year

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A successful AGM was held on 27 April at the Royal British Legion Hall, about 60 members being present. Reports from the Hon Sec and Hon Treasurer were distributed and these indicated a continuing high level of activity by the Society. Both reports were accepted by the Meeting. Appeals were made to members to volunteer to assist with both planning and publicity.

The following Officers and Executive Committee members were elected:

President: Mr L J Mayes
 Vice-presidents: Miss M Nash and Cllr Mrs K Peatey JP
 Chairman: Mr R J Lawson (HW 28047)
 Vice-chairman: Mrs E Roe (HW 32575)
 Hon Secretary: Mr J S Gore (HW 26671)
 Hon Treasurer: Mr N Giles
 Committee: Mr C Adams (HW 28996), Mr B Honess (HW 37242), Mrs P Kearney, Mrs M King (HW 23968) (Pann Mill Group), Mr J Lee (HW 29456), Mrs P Phillips (HW 31049), Mr R J Rippington, Mr J Scruton (HW25933) (Planning Secretary), Mr R L Sims (HW 440800) (Minutes Secretary), Mrs J Tully (Penn 3253), Mrs A Woodward (HW 27978) (Membership Secretary).

This leaves one vacancy on the Committee which it is permissible to fill by co-option.

WILDLIFE IN WYCOMBE

After the formal business of the AGM, Maurice Young of the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Naturalists' Trust gave an illustrated talk on "Wild Life in the Wycombe Area". We were pleasantly surprised to learn that BBONT supervises and manages several nature reserves quite close to the town of High Wycombe, each with its own species of flora and fauna. We were treated to a rich display of coloured slides illustrating the many types of habitat and the amazing variety of

creatures and plants to be found there. Perhaps the most intriguing of the many orchids to be seen was the ghost orchid; it survives on leaf litter in the beech woods, is almost colourless and invisible, and yet naturalists queue up to get a glimpse of it! Good luck, BBONT, in your invaluable wildlife preservation work!

John Gore

MRS MAIMIE MARTIN

We record with regret the death on 17 June 1989 of Mrs Maimie Martin, wife of Wing Commander Derek Martin. Together they were for many years tireless campaigners for the conservation of the Chilterns, and as active members of the Chiltern Society supported the same causes as our own Society at public enquiries etc affecting High Wycombe and district. Maimie was an elected member of the Executive of the Chiltern Society for 20 years and was one of the founders of the Chiltern Open Air Museum. She set a fine example of dedication to public life, being active in local government, politics and the church. We sympathise with Derek Martin in his bereavement.



Planning

Redfords Playing Field, Totteridge

A very serious threat has arisen concerning this popular and essential playing field. The County, in its continual drive to sell land which it considers is surplus to requirements, has applied to use the majority of the playing field for housing. The application ignores completely the needs of the local community and it is not surprising that there is great opposition to the proposals. We have made the strongest possible objections to the County and District Councils, and we have also asked the National Playing Fields' Association for its support.

The Pit, Bellfield Road

The development of this land has become a struggle between the ambitions of Mr Beeks to build something, no matter what, and the determination of the District Council to oppose. Mr Beeks has applied to use the land for industrial purposes despite the fact that this would be contrary to the new Local Plan. A Local Inquiry is to be held on 13th July. Another application to use the site for housing has also been submitted by Mr Beeks. Both applications include provision for a new Salvation Hall as a kind of "planning gain". We have supported the Council in its opposition and have criticised the way the proposal for the Salvation Army Hall is being used in this way. The present hall in Frogmoor is a familiar Edwardian building in the right place and is no way "crumbling" as has been suggested.

Jack Scruton

Stewart and Arnold

The Society opposed this application to build offices on the old factory site, and, we suggested a mixed use for shopping, housing and community purposes. Because of traffic problems we are relieved to hear that the office use has been refused. We now have a splendid opportunity to bring this dismal site back to life.

Wouldn't it be encouraging to see the return of those specialist shops long gone? A good restaurant, and a few houses, perhaps? Some community use would be most welcome. The entire area could be pedestrianised, and as the grand piece de resistance the Council could rid us once and for all, of that eyesore, Bridge Street Car Park, and reinstate the Wye.

This could be the beginning of the revival of this historic and once very attractive town. How sad if we allow this opportunity to be wasted on yet another boring Superstore.

Karen Isaacs



HERITAGE

The County Council has proposed that the old Grammar School in Easton Street should be converted to offices, with one of the Victorian buildings demolished, and extra offices built in its place. The District Council has proposed that the buildings should be listed as a good example of

Arthur Vernon's work in the town and also because of their part in the long and continuous history of Grammar School education from Elizabethan times to the present day. We have written also to the Department of the Environment supporting listing and have also asked the Victorian Society for its support.

JOIN THE CIVIC TRUST

The Benefits of Joining

Perhaps the main reward will be the knowledge that you are contributing to the care of Britain's cities, towns and villages. But there are tangible benefits as well:

As a full member, you get:

- bi-monthly issues of *Heritage Outlook*, the Trust's own quality house journal keeping you in touch with current environmental issues.
- the opportunity to attend prestigious events, including the Civic Trust Awards, the Building a Better Britain Exhibition; and the Trust's Annual Conference for Communities.
- the chance to join the Trust's programme of organised tours to places and developments of interest.
- up to 20% discount on all Civic Trust publications.

Plus

- two entries for the price of one to leading English Heritage attractions.
- free initial research into your family tree by qualified genealogists.
- details of Town Walks to help you enjoy the historic centres of Britain.
- discounts in leading hotels and restaurants.
- *The Times* "Museum Passport" for concessions at museums and galleries throughout Britain.
- British Rail family railcards, for 1/2 to 1/3 off standard fares.



For the first time in its 30 year history, the Civic Trust is inviting personal membership. Prince Charles, their Patron, has become Member No 1. Thanks to the influence of the Civic Trust in framing legislation, we have in this country nearly 6000 conservation areas protected against indiscriminate development, laws to protect our valuable older buildings, and Green Belts around many of our cities. The Civic Trust has initiated many pioneering schemes for protecting and improving the environment; for example, National Environment Week. It is the umbrella organisation for nearly 1000 local civic and amenity societies like our own; now, everyone, both members and non-members of local societies, is to be given the opportunity of belonging to the Civic Trust directly. Full Membership costs £25 per year, with benefits listed on the adjacent panel; whilst Local Membership, confined to members of local societies, costs £15 per year, but without the "plus" benefits. Apply to the Hon Sec or to the Civic Trust, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AW for a leaflet with enrolment form if you are interested in joining.

The Civic Trust would like to set up a network of local agents who will receive a commission on recruiting new members. Anyone interested should contact the Civic Trust Membership Secretary (Mr Linden Dyason) on 01-839 6552 or write to the aforementioned address.



OVER THE SHOP

Crime and vandalism in town centres at night could well be reduced if more people actually lived there. What is more, buildings might be better maintained. Until about 30 years ago there was a much healthier situation; most upper floors of shops were occupied by families, and town centres were living entities by day and night.

English Heritage are attempting to encourage upper floor occupation with their travelling exhibition "Over the Shop" [English Heritage Conservation Bulletin February 1989]. Since 1983 they have visited more than 60 local authority areas and have stimulated a number of individual schemes, notably in Ipswich and Cambridge. In Ipswich, a dozen houses have been renovated so far and these have provided 38 units of accommodation at an average grant cost of £8400. Owners were offered 75% grants for making the accommodation habitable.

The scheme has revitalised part of the historic town centre and increased the availability of affordable housing for rental. Both this and the Cambridge programme have led to an improvement in the townscape in a short time and have proved the cost effectiveness of conservation both for the local authority and for the property owner. Maybe we in High Wycombe could also benefit from a scheme like this.

John Gore

21ST ANNIVERSARY SHOW

Much has happened in High Wycombe and district in the past twentyone years during the life of the High Wycombe Society. The Society was formed in November 1968 in the wake of the successful struggle by the Rye Protection Society to prevent a new road from mutilating the Rye. It was too late to campaign against much of the organised vandalism of the 60s, but it has been active ever since, not just negatively against developments judged to be detrimental, but also positively for projects aimed at enhancing our local environment. The activities of the Society since its foundation will be presented in an exhibition of photographs, drawings, maps, cartoons and other documents on the Central Library staircase from 4-23 September during Library opening hours. Admission, of course, is free. Don't miss it!

HUGHENDEN VALLEY appeal

The High Wycombe Society has made a donation of £100 to the Hughenden Valley Appeal made by the National Trust to ensure the protection of Naphill Farm. The Executive Committee voted £50 from the Society's funds, and members at the AGM donated £50 in a special collection. Any further donations may be sent to:- The National Trust, Hughenden Valley Appeal, PO Box No 211, High Wycombe, HP13 6QF.

COUNCILLOR PEATEY JP

Congratulations to Kathleen Peatey, one of the Society's joint Vice-Presidents, on taking office as Chairman of the Wycombe District Council. We wish her a successful year in this important position, especially as her theme is to be the improvement of the environment.

WALKING THE TRAILS

Walking the Society's Town Trail around the town-centre conservation area and the Water Trail around the Rye is one of the regular attractions of Environment Week, and this year was no exception. It can be done quite frequently without fear of boring repetition; each time there is something of architectural or historic interest to learn even in a Wycombe which has lost many of its old buildings. This year, the attendance was not as great as last, but two keen groups of six or seven spent a pleasant two and a half hours meandering from the Parish Church to Pann Mill guided by Barbara Ripington and Annie Woodward. There we were met by a similar sized group who had returned from circumnavigating the Rye under the experienced guidance of Jack Scruton. Together we enjoyed a welcome cup of tea and delicious home-made cakes provided by Diana Stone and her team of helpers. "Thankyou" to all who contributed. If you haven't tried the trails before, why don't you come next time?

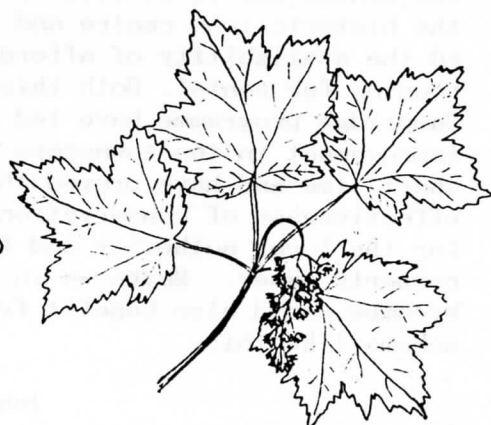
The late Jim Cottrell played a considerable part in first devising the trails. Here we reproduce two of his cartoons taken from Newsletter No 25 Summer 1975 (by kind permission of Mrs M Cottrell) giving his impression of what might have happened on the Town Trail. For the uninitiated, Coltman's was at 29 High Street, which is now occupied by the Woolwich Building Society.



ENVIRONMENT WEEK

The Heritage Group, in partnership with Berks, Bucks and Oxon Naturalists Trust (BBONT) and the Wycombe Urban Wild Life Group, surveyed the old Council Nature Trail in Keep Hill Woods and a revised trail has now been devised. Delightful illustrations by Frances Wilding have been included. We are now consulting the Leisure Division of the District Council with a view to publication.

SYCAMORE



DON HIDE

Drawings for trail by Frances Wilding



AS WE WERE - FROM THE NEWSLETTER FILE

10 YEARS AGO (NO 37)

M J Jeanes' appeal to build on Green Hill Farm site dismissed after Public Enquiry at which the Society appeared. Biffa apply to set up refuse tip on Green Belt land between Loudwater and Beaconsfield. Colin Kennedy draws up plans for a building to house Pann Mill machinery.

I. J Mayes speaks on "The Pubs of Wycombe".

20 YEARS AGO (NO 2)

The owners of the old Chequers Inn on the corner of White Hart Street and Church Street apply for demolition with a view to redevelopment; Society promises a fight. Society objects at a Public Enquiry to the proposed closure of the High Wycombe-Bourne End railway line. Plans afoot to build Sports Centre at the top of Marlow Hill. Derek Woods organises coach and canal trips for Society members. (He's still at it. Is this a record? Ed.)

BUILDING IN HARMONY

Our Wycombe Arts Festival lecturer this year was George Perkin, architect and journalist, who eloquently demonstrated in words and pictures how new buildings can be designed to be placed harmoniously amongst architecture of earlier periods. This he did with illustrations from towns and cities in the United Kingdom and abroad. He even showed how a multi storey car park could be made to fit into an old town quite happily without grating on the sensitivities of conservationists! Mr Perkin went on to show the importance of roof-scape in achieving harmony. He made his point by modifying the roofscape of the City of London (on a slide!) and gave it a look which was almost Venetian in style. Oh for an architect well-versed in harmonious design to work on our new Entertainments Centre!

WOODLAND TRUST

The Woodland Trust is a national charity which aims to safeguard trees by raising money to buy and look after woods which might otherwise be destroyed and which are vitally important to our wildlife. They also plant new trees to create new woods. Already they are one of the country's largest non-commercial woodland landowners and so far have raised over £10million for conservation. If you are interested in joining the Trust or in finding out more about it, please contact The Woodland Trust, Autumn Park, Grantham, Lincs, NG31 6LL.

RECRUIT A NEW MEMBER

In this 21st Anniversary Year make a special effort to enrol new members to make us a more effective Society. Our Membership Secretary, Mrs Annie Woodward, is ready and eager to sign on your friends and neighbours. Phone her on HW 27978.

OLD BEACONSFIELD TALK

Many architectural secrets were revealed on the evening of 16th May, when John Broadbent treated us to a fascinating talk on Old Beaconsfield, at the Friends Meeting House. This was an event organised by the Heritage Group, and very enjoyable it was, too. First of all, Mr Broadbent explained how Beaconsfield came to exist, centuries ago, when farmers from the surrounding Chilterns settled in the area near an ancient crossroads. Now for those architectural secrets: Mr Broadbent disclosed, with the aid of some lovely slides, that many Tudor and Medieval buildings are hidden behind those genteel Georgian facades. The give-away in most cases is the roof. Look up and you will see the steeply-sloped roof of the original building. John Broadbent has spent over 30 years researching Beaconsfield's rich history, and not only the buildings, but the people who have inhabited them throughout the centuries. I was amazed to discover how many pubs there were - and indeed still are - in this little town, many of them having sprung from simple ale houses, when some Medieval or Tudor housewife would have brewed ale to drink in preference to the dodgy water of the day. It seems that food scares are nothing new! Finally we were invited to ask questions (and isn't it always the way that you remember the very thing you had been wondering about for years on the way home!) and so ended a memorable evening. We will now look at Beaconsfield with renewed interest!

DENISE LINDSAY

CHARITY STALL

Members and friends of the High Wycombe Society contributed many lovely things to be sold on the charity stall in the Cornmarket on Easter Saturday. Customers were waiting for us when we first arrived at 7.20am. The lovely cakes we were supplied with were priced at not rock-bottom prices, as it is unfair if they are sold too cheaply

after people have spent time and money making them. Much haggling went on with one gentleman repeatedly offering cash if we would reduce our prices; but, unfortunately, we did not reduce the price of a music stand sufficiently to get rid of it. We took it in turns to go to the Guildhall to look at the splendid painting of Lorna Cassidy on show there. Some books and crockery which we had left at midday were gladly bought by other stallholders; and some second-hand clothes were gratefully received by the soup kitchen standing in the Dovecot car park near Sainsburys. It was great fun, and we made 138.46. We met many nice people who expressed support for the High Wycombe Society, though none could be persuaded to join. They were fearful for the future of the town and sad about many of the changes made already. Thank you to all who gave us things to sell, and/or bought things from us.

PEGGY PHILLIPS

Much of the credit for the success of the charity stall should go to Peggy Phillips herself for organising the stall and getting good prices for the produce - Hon Sec.



AFFILIATIONS

The High Wycombe Society is affiliated to a number of national and local societies with interests in various conservation fields; similarly, a number of local societies and residents' associations are affiliated to us. We are frequently able to offer help to one or other of these societies; and often in return we obtain valuable advice and support from them in dealing with particular problems. Many of the societies send us their journals, magazines or newsletters on a monthly or quarterly basis. These contain a wealth of information about their activities yielding many useful ideas for furthering the objectives of our own Society.

Some journals are of particular interest to the Heritage Group, whereas others are only seen by members of the Executive Committee. The EC would like to spread the information more widely and invites members to volunteer to follow the activities of one or more societies more closely, perhaps reporting on their findings in the Newsletter. If anyone is interested, please contact the Hon Sec. It would be particularly helpful if someone would agree to liaise with the Wycombe Arts Festival.

The following is a list of societies and their publications. There are of course many local affiliated residents' associations which do not send us any information on a regular basis.

Civic Trust *Heritage Outlook*;
Council for the Protection of Rural England *Countryside Campaigner*;
Open Spaces Society *Open Space*;
Victorian Society *News*; Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings *News*; Trees Council *Tree News*;
Centre for Environmental Interpretation; Europa Nostra; Chiltern Society *Chiltern News*; Wycombe & District Arts Association; Penn & Tylers Green RA; Hughenden Park RA; Booker Common & Woods Protection Society; Chesham Society; Aylesbury Society; Amersham Society; Priory Centre; Wycombe Arts Festival.



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK: LITTERBLITZ

LACK of suitable publicity about the event may have accounted for the few members of the High Wycombe Society who turned out early on the morning of April 22 to join with the Trinity Reformed Church Boys Brigade in a Litterblitz at Keep Hill Wood. Small numbers did not deter the "blitzers" from having a good try at clearing the wood of the beverage cans, glass bottles and snackfood plastic bags that congregate in little dells and around the benches intended for tired ramblers. The country of origin of much of the debris suggests that a nearby military establishment could do well in their organising of regular blitzes of litter in this scenic wood. We were grateful to the Boys Brigade for the hot soup that was delivered by a "chuck wagon" just in time to revive our flagging spirits. Countless plastic bags of collected litter were deposited in the skip provided by Bucks County Council, and one appreciative member of the public has subsequently been kind enough to write to the local press to acknowledge the efforts of the High Wycombe Society in the woods at the start of the Environment Week.

Roger Lawson

We warmly welcome the following new members who have recently joined the Society:-

Miss J M Field, Wargrave, Berks

Mr P C Robins, Amersham Hill, High Wycombe

Mr C Sherwood, Bowden Lane, High Wycombe

Mr & Mrs P J Tozer, Hughenden Avenue, H Wycombe

Dr E Woodward, The Haystacks, High Wycombe

Mrs J James, Wordsworth Road, High Wycombe

Miss P Brooks, Plomer Green Ave, High Wycombe

Mr & Mrs N J Phillips, Pinewood Road, Sands

Mr A B Lowe, Copes Shroves, Hazlemere

We also welcome the re-affiliation of Deangarden Wood Residents' Association



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 4 September - Saturday
23 September 1989
Central Library staircase

Thursday 5 October 1989 8pm
at Royal British Legion Hall

Friday 10 November 1989 8pm
Oak Room, Town Hall

Saturday 25 November -
Sunday 3 December 1989

High Wycombe Society 21st
Anniversary exhibition

Open Spaces of Britain
Kate Ashbrook Open Spaces Society

21st Birthday Celebration of High
Wycombe Society (details in this
Newsletter - book now)

National Tree Week



Please send your contributions for
the next issue of the newsletter to:-

John Gore
30 Wordsworth Road
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire

~thankyou.