



THE HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

newsletter

NUMBER 96

SUMMER 1995

Parking Plan for High Wycombe

(1) The Proposals

'New parking proposals have been prepared for High Wycombe. How will they transform the town and affect you? Have your say on the proposals.' So began the public consultation document on a new parking plan proposed as part of a strategy to reduce traffic impact and improve environmental quality in the town. Bucks County Council and Wycombe District Council appointed Colin Buchanan & Partners to do research into parking and prepare a plan, which the public were asked to comment on in March and April.

Everyone, whether they own a car or not, is aware that there is a parking problem. According to the report, hundreds of cars are parked for long periods on streets in and near the town centre, while at the same time there are plenty of empty spaces in many of the car parks. By 2001 it is predicted that there will be 13% more cars owned by residents, whilst parking demand will increase by 13% for long-stay and 18% for short-stay parking. So what can be done to tackle the problem?

The key proposals affect the town centre and an 'outer controlled parking zone'. In the town centre, most on-street parking would be limited to 30 minute pay-and-display, with a few free

(continued on page 2)

Coffee Morning

Saturday 8 July

Members, old and new – and friends – are invited to our Coffee Morning, to be held at the Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, between 1030 and 1230 on Saturday 8 July.

Apart from the coffee and home-made cakes, there will be a Bring-and-Buy Stall, and most importantly the chance to meet members of the Executive Committee, and the Membership & Publicity Group to find out more about what we are, what we do and how we do it. You may even find you would like to participate in a more active way than at present.

From personal experience, I know that by joining in occasions like this, opportunities arise for making friends and for doing something useful.

We look forward to seeing you. Make a note in your diary now!

Ann Simone

Membership & Publicity Group



...caring about our town and heritage

Registered Charity No. 257897

Honorary Secretary, John Gore, 30 Wordsworth Road, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 2UR. Tel: (0494) 526671

PARKING PLAN (continued from page 1)

10-minute short-stay bays, all operating 7 days per week. Outside the town centre, to deter all-day parkers, some street bays will be reserved for residents and others for one- or two-hour pay-and-display parking. Controversially, residents would need to purchase permits to park in the road outside their own homes. There are likely to be more yellow lines to prevent parked vehicles from obstructing fire-brigade access etc. Also, some partial pavement parking is proposed.

What was the reaction?

(2) A Resident's Reaction

Jane Dunsterville, one of our members who lives in Coningsby Road, writes of her own frustration at receiving a fixed-penalty ticket for 'causing an obstruction' by partially parking on the pavement outside her own home, even though she did so to avoid obstructing the road. Here is an edited version of her own story and views.

Have you ever had a parking ticket for parking outside your own home? It has become impossible to drive safely or park legally anywhere in residential areas within walking distance of High Wycombe town centre. The epidemic of parking tickets is doing nothing to help!

The root of the problem is that the convenience of door-to-door travel has made many of us selfish and lazy, and when there was plenty of space, it did not matter too much whether or not you really needed a car. If you could afford it, you bought it. But when so many houses were split into flats and bedsits, space disappeared, leaving the present mess.

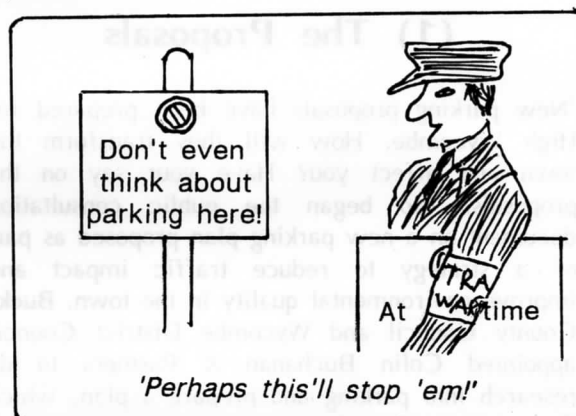
In Coningsby Road we have two problems: multiple occupation of a fair number of semi-detached houses, where there was no provision made for any parking whatsoever, due mainly to the very steep hillside; and the two garages on Hamilton Road at the town end of Coningsby Road which add to the parking and traffic. Traffic has also increased due to back-garden starter-home development in Lawsone Rise. All of these developments were given approval by the Council in spite of local opposition.

Traffic calming measures would make our road safer for parking, but given the number of cars at some addresses, there is simply not enough road space for them all. The roadside opposite my house was fully occupied by parked cars when I received my ticket. I was accused of obstruction, but I had parked with two wheels on the pavement to avoid causing an obstruction. As

a responsible road user, it seemed only sensible to park partially on the pavement, leaving the road clear for other vehicles whilst not obstructing the pavement, actually leaving a two-metre gap.

What is the answer? I suppose those who can will start bulldozing their front gardens to create parking space, but in my case I have been quoted many £000s for the work. What about a coordinated scheme like that in Hughenden Road? Or how about giving us access to our back gardens, so that people can build garages without affecting the look of the road? Then, I say, the Council can go ahead with parking permits, meters, yellow lines etc and we can get back to leading our lives in peace.

We ought to mention that we have had correspondence from some members who are adamant that partial pavement parking should not be allowed because of the risk it poses to pedestrians. Ed.



(3) High Wycombe Society Transport Group Response

This is an edited version of the Transport Group's response to the Parking Plan, not to Jane Dunsterville's problem.

The Transport Group believes that, together with other measures, parking restrictions are vital for reducing the number and length of motorised journeys as required by Government planning policy guidance (PPG13), and considers that the proposals are substantially correct in themselves. However, they think that presentation to the public has been unsatisfactory in a number of respects:

O *inadequate details* – misunderstanding could have been avoided if more explanatory detail had
(continued on page 3)

ANTAS Meets Again

The Association of North Thames Amenity Societies (ANTAS) was launched last year on the initiative of the Civic Trust, and now comprises 14 amenity societies located in Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and western Hertfordshire. One of its first acts was to support the High Wycombe Society in the Holywell Mead campaign. Representatives of the member societies met at Bletchley on 8 April and were welcomed by Vanessa McPake, who spoke on behalf of the Milton Keynes Forum. As part of the expanding 'city' of Milton Keynes, Bletchley and the other component towns and villages were in danger of losing their individuality and being submerged in a sea of huge uninteresting buildings. She described the new theatre in Milton Keynes, which had many 'appalling' features that could have been rectified by a little more consultation with local amenity groups.

MASA

Mrs McPake was followed by Graham Reddie of the Midland Amenity Societies Association (MASA), the forerunner and inspiration to ANTAS. MASA now has no fewer than 71 member societies, but is likely to split into associations covering the West and East Midlands respectively. Mr Reddie said that the protection of the Green Belt and worries about roadbuilding were the chief preoccupations of those who sought the help of his association.

MASA had sought sponsorship from industry,

with some success. To achieve results, one needed three things: (i) clear aims; (ii) a healthy balance sheet; and (iii) a business plan.

Rapid Reaction

Since some planning issues tend to arise at very short notice, so a 'rapid reaction group' is being formed by ANTAS to help individual societies when the task in hand appears too daunting. One such issue is the proposal for a fifth terminal at Heathrow Airport. The meeting discussed this at some length. We hope to present ANTAS's considered views in our next issue.

Chilterns AONB

Lastly, Steve Rodrick, the recently-appointed Chilterns AONB Officer, showed a number of slides which illustrated not only the natural beauty of the region, but the manner in which it is being threatened by many, sometimes conflicting, pressures in what is a heavily populated region. Demands for houses, golf courses, mineral extraction, timber plantation, intensive farming, road improvements, telecommunications masts – all these are changing the appearance of the Chilterns, mostly to their detriment. How can we accommodate our need for greater enjoyment of life and increased convenience of access with our longing to preserve the region's natural beauty? That is a question to which we would all like to find a simple answer. There is none.

Ian Guy

PARKING PLAN (continued from page 2)

been given; for example, details of the usage of the Resident's Parking Permit are far from clear.

O *a missed opportunity for public education* – the parking restrictions are a novelty which was bound to arouse opposition from many quarters, but this heightened public interest should have been better exploited as an opportunity to educate the public in the fundamentals of land use and the huge amount of land taken for car parking. Every parking space encourages another car journey, which in turn stimulates the demand for increased parking elsewhere, but land is a finite resource and therefore must be conserved. (Look at what has happened in Los Angeles, and compare Switzerland, with 50% of journeys done by public transport, 17% by bike, and parking

made difficult.)

O *attractive alternatives essential* – we believe there is little point in consulting people about restrictions on cars unless and until attractive, cheap alternatives are either operating or imminent; public transport in the area at present is very expensive and very poor; in addition to good public transport there must be good shopping delivery services (to reduce car-dependent shopping), cheap school transport, cycle paths and cycle parking facilities, and closely-integrated rail/bus/tram/cycle services etc, including facilities for taking bikes on buses and trains.

O *regional parking restrictions* – to be effective, similar restrictions must be applied over a wide area, otherwise traffic will be attracted to neighbouring towns, with no overall benefit. □

1995 Annual General Meeting

The 1995 Annual General Meeting was held on 6 April at the Reggie Goves Centre, Pauls Row under the chairmanship of Roger Lawson. The Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer both gave their reports for 1994/95 (copies available from the Hon Sec if SAE is supplied), after which the election of officers and members of the Executive Committee took place. The following were appointed:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman Roger Lawson 01494 528047

Vice-chairman Evelyn Roe 01494 532575

Honorary Secretary John Gore 01494 526671

Honorary Treasurer Nick Giles

Pauline Cauvain 01494 529224

Philip Crouch 01494 523852

Ian Guy 01494 716997

Peter Hazzard 01494 447949

Myra King 01494 523968 (Pann Mill)

Olive Scruton 01494 525933

Ron Sims 01494 440800 (Minutes Sec)

Annie Woodward 01494 527978 (Membership Sec)

(4 vacancies)

The Chairman appealed to members to consider coming forward to fill the vacancies and serve on the Committee, and it is hoped that there will be a response. After the business of the AGM there was a talk by Lilli Matson of CPRE on mineral extraction. See report below.

Minerals Extraction and Sustainable Development

After the AGM on 6 April, Lilli Matson, who is Assistant Secretary (Energy & Minerals) at the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), spoke to us about her organisation's views on the extraction of minerals, which includes rock, sand and gravel. Millions of tons are used each year on new roads, by far the largest consumer, and on new buildings etc.. As can well be imagined, mineral extraction has a devastating effect on both landscape and wild life, and, with the heavy traffic, dust and noise generated, it proves to be a bad neighbour to anyone unfortunate enough to live nearby.

Unusually in the UK, where most industrial development is market led, the planning of mineral-extraction rates is guided by the Department of the Environment, which sets regional targets. The south-east counties of England are expected to produce some 420 million tons of sand and gravel by 2006, with 1.2 million tons per year being required from Buckinghamshire. A long-standing criticism of the system is that planning permission for mineral extraction, once given, can be kept going indefinitely, unlike other planning permissions which have a 5-year life. Some even date from the 1940s!

The Government's recent acceptance of the principle of sustainable development, that is, 'to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', has until now scarcely reached the mineral-extraction industry. The CPRE believes that mineral extraction, which is clearly inherently non-sustainable, should be slowed down by such means as:

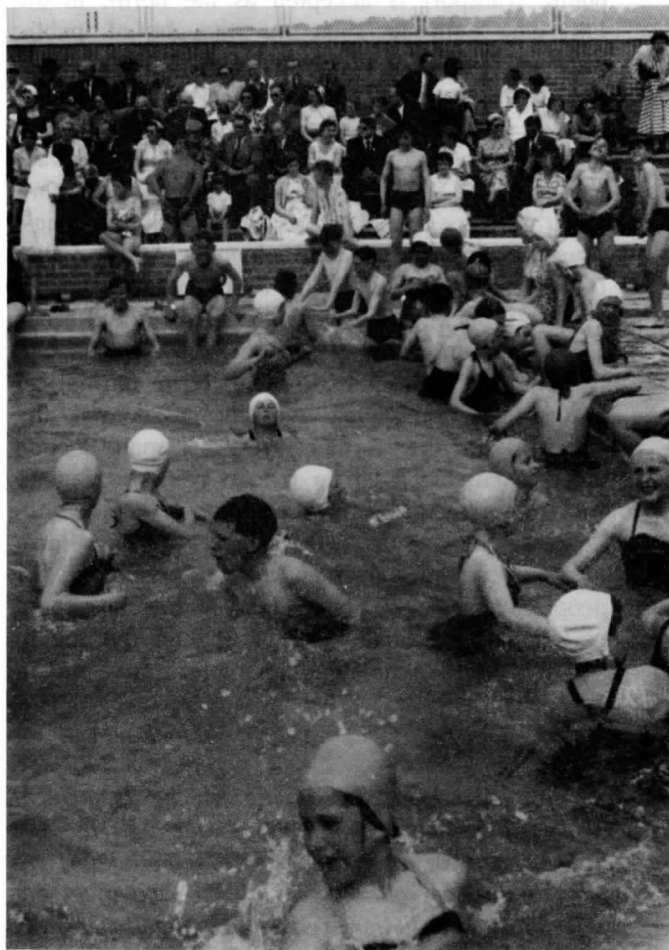
- the imposition of a tax on primary extraction,
- a greater emphasis on the recycling of materials, aided perhaps by the imposition of a tax to discourage the burying of rubble in landfill sites,
- more durable housing construction and the multiple use of buildings to minimise the need for new construction as in Denmark,
- more efficient design of buildings in terms of a reduction in the amount of aggregate used, and
- the adoption of policies to reduce vehicle usage to enable a reduction in the roads programme.

John Gore

Holywell Mead Open Air Swimming Pool

Almost 40 years of Summer Enjoyment

As we go to press, we still await the results of Wycombe District Council's public consultation held in March this year on the future of the Holywell Mead Open Air Swimming Pool and the associated car parking: will it be refurbished, covered, grassed over or moved elsewhere? Meanwhile, Mrs Suzanne Grant of Chestnut Avenue has sent us some interesting items from her scrapbook, including the accompanying photograph taken on the day the pool opened in 1957. Suzanne is in the forefront



of the picture. The pool featured in a North Thames Gas Board newsletter of that year as 'the first open-air pool built to Amateur Swimming Association standards to be opened in this country since 1938', and, of course, gas heating was employed. The newsletter also recalled that the Romans (or was it the Romano-British?) built a villa with a plunge bath on the site nearly 2000 years ago.

Mrs Grant's other cuttings recall the threat to the pool's future in 1986/87, when she and many others wrote to the local press and the Council pleading for the pool to remain open. She wrote: 'I've always looked forward to going there whenever I can, usually once a week since the pool opened. From the time my children were born, we always paid the Rye pool a visit whenever possible, taking a picnic lunch.....A large number of the public do not like stuffy indoor pools. Leave our Rye open air pool alone!' On that occasion her pleas were heard and acted upon.

So as a seasoned campaigner, now taking her grandchildren to the pool, she joined the latest 'Save the Rye' campaign, fearing that the Council's proposal for a leisure centre would offer facilities 'too expensive for an awful lot of people's

pockets' and lead to the loss of her much-loved open air swimming pool. Let us hope she is not disappointed.

It is interesting to note the report in the Bucks Free Press of 12 May 1995 that in 1994 the Holywell Mead Swimming Pool attracted more people than usual, and, instead of making a predicted loss of £10000, actually broke even!



Wycombe Arts Festival

Jean Archer gave an excellent illustrated talk on *Hidden Bucks* at our Wycombe Arts Festival meeting at the Guildhall on 18 May. We hope to bring you a report in our next issue. The evening was a sell-out. All 50 tickets were sold in advance, and we do apologise to all those who were not able to gain admission. Unfortunately the Guildhall has a maximum capacity of 50 for fire-precautions' reasons. We will make sure we book a larger hall for future events of this appeal. □

Munich and its Transportation

Munich is a city committed to public transport. The whole ethos of the city revolves around its investment in major long-term infrastructure development, pollution control and recycling initiatives.

The most recent example is the closure of Rheims Airport and the construction out of the city of Freising International Airport. Before any terminal buildings were constructed, new over-ground and underground systems were introduced, and new motorways were built for cars. All this took place five years prior to any major construction on the airfield. The underground system, which must be one of the most efficient and clean in the world, is constantly being updated and extended to cover areas that are expanding outside the city centre.

Car parking at the pick-up points is free, and most commuters to the city centre use the underground for both business and pleasure. City-centre car parking is extremely expensive. In any case, if pollution levels are above the permitted ceiling, cars are turned round and banned from the centre. Another example of the disciplined attitude towards the quality of life is the switching off of vehicle engines if a delay is experienced. My son, who lives on the outskirts of Munich, was running up his diesel-engined Jeep to clear frost from the windscreen and was threatened with police action if he persisted in this practice. We are not used to this type of autocratic control in the UK, but the improvement in the quality of life is obvious. Cars must not be washed in the streets for fear of polluting the water supply, and vehicle washing takes place in special washes where interceptors are installed. Incidentally, all

dwelling have at least two refuse bins, one for disposable products and one for recycling.

To ensure good driver behaviour, automatic speed control systems are used, based on the philosophy that 'prevention is better than cure'. All these initiatives do not prevent peak-hour congestion or traffic accidents, but the use of public transport is accepted as the norm. In the UK we seem to shun the thought of public transport and as a consequence life within cities and towns, especially inside the M25 ring, is for many intolerable. It may be argued that Germany, which was devastated in the last war, has had the opportunity to redevelop at a more leisurely pace, but the striking point is the long-term commitment and planning for public transport. (Note: Whilst on a short stay a couple of years back, the reconstruction of the former East German railway system was announced. Billions of Deutschmarks had been earmarked before any rebuilding was proposed and the factories in the former West German section were discussing a ten to fifteen year programme for the supply of railway equipment.)

Because of the UK's lack of long-term thinking on the movement of large numbers of people, I fear we have left it too late, and certainly in the South-East of England the quality of life will continue to deteriorate as a consequence.

Alan Page

Thank you, Alan, for giving us the benefit of your experience in Germany. When will the UK realise that we must follow similar policies if we are to improve our quality of life and meet our international pollution-reduction obligations? Ed.

The Cream Card

The current programme card is now available and will be sent out to all paid-up members. (*I hope you've got yours! Ed.*) Please keep it handy (on your notice board, behind the clock or wherever) so that you do not miss any dates. The Membership & Publicity Group has given considerable time and thought to planning the programme, so we hope you will find the variety of meetings and outings of interest to you. We would be encouraged if you could bring a friend to enjoy an event and, hopefully, to be inspired to join the Society.

WE NEED NEW MEMBERS WITH FRESH IDEAS!

Do not hesitate to approach any member of our Group with ideas for future programmes and comments on past events, too.

Olivia Price, Barbara Rippington, Olive Scruton, Ann Simone, Ron Sims, Mavis Varley and Annie Woodward

Membership & Publicity Group

High Wycombe Society Heritage Group

I recently attended a conference in Marlow organised by the Wycombe District Council on Town Centre Management. The Council outlined its ideas for the town centre, and various professional bodies gave their views on such questions as:

- Pedestrianisation – does it work?
- Is a town centre really needed now?
- How does transport affect a town?

The meeting was well worthwhile, but what really came over was the message of how much a Council (any Council) needs feedback from the people, whether it be as criticism or praise. Although our Heritage Group is small, we like to think that with our liaison with the Council we are helping not only with the development of the town, but also in preserving our heritage

in an all-too-quickly changing society.

The Heritage Group needs your help. Perhaps you are not able to attend our meetings for one reason or another, but I do hope you have views and ideas, and the group is inviting you to put pen to paper and let us have them. It would be better still if you could attend a meeting so that we can discuss your points. We are at present getting together a display for the Society stand in the Conservation Marquee at Wycombe Show, and would welcome your help.

If you would like to contact us, please write to or call either Mrs Denise Lindsay, 11 New Road, Sands, High Wycombe HP12 4LH Tel: 01494 525948 or Mrs Pauline Cauvain, 97 Guinions Road, High Wycombe HP13 7NU Tel: 01494 529224.

Pauline Cauvain

The Reference Library Fireplace

You may recall our Spring Newsletter's Etcetera column in which Denise Lindsay mourned the loss of the Adam-style fireplace from the High Wycombe Reference Library. Well, we have had a letter from Martin Andrew, the Wycombe District Council Conservation Officer, to tell us that the fireplace has not been lost. He rescued it, and, what is more, has had it restored, together with its accompanying plaster relief tondo! (*Tondo – a circular painting or relief.*) The restoration work was carried out by the Cliveden Conservation Workshops, who were impressed with the tondo which features Aeneas fleeing the burning ruins of Troy. This had been obscured by many layers of coarse paint, but its modelling is good and it appears to be a high quality piece.

The fireplace itself was not of high quality: its attribution to Adam was fanciful to say the least. However, it is important as a survival of General Le Marchant's house, believed to be on the site of the Church Street entrance to the Chilterns Shopping Centre. The General was influential in the Royal Military College during its brief sojourn in the High Street.

We are pleased to hear this good news from Martin, and thank him for his concern for a piece of High Wycombe's heritage. We look forward to seeing the fireplace and tondo again, when they are installed, possibly in the Wycombe Swan complex, in the not too distant future.

John Gore

ET CETERA

We have seen many War Memorials on our television screens during the recent celebrations to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of VE Day, but a 'Peace Memorial' must be almost unique – and we have one in High Wycombe! It is in the form of a stained-glass window, which can be found halfway up the staircase in the Guildhall. Have a look at it when you have the chance. It depicts an angel greeting a soldier, and has the following inscription:

1922
WELCOME HOME – WELL DONE
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THE
PATRIOTIC SERVICES OF THE 5000 MEN
OF WYCOMBE WHO FOUGHT IN THE
GREAT WAR 1914-1918 AND WERE
SPARED TO RETURN

Anon

New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members:

Mr R D Axten, Carver Hill Road
Mr P Wagstaff, Amersham Road

We look forward to meeting our new members at the next Quarterly Meeting. Please introduce yourself!

Congratulations!

(1) **Congratulations** to Roger Wilding, one of our members and also associated with the Wycombe Urban Wildlife Group, for his success in winning Wycombe District Council's 1995 Environment Award Trophy for his wildlife garden. The Environmental Award is for action which enhances and conserves the environment.

(2) **Congratulations** to Wycombe District Council for winning a BT Environment Week – Local Authority Award. Only 20 of these awards are made each year to local authorities whose programme of initiatives best target current environmental priorities. The Award is said to reflect the Council's commitment to partnership working, which is the key to the success of their new Environment Strategy.

Obituary

Margaret Cottrell

We are sad to record the death of Margaret Cottrell, at the beginning of April.

Always interested in the best for High Wycombe, she was particularly keen on the preservation of The Rye as a jewel of unspoilt green for the enjoyment of everybody. In fact, one of the last things she did was to answer the Council's questionnaire on the future of the Holywell Mead Swimming Pool and its adjacent car park.

She had been a keen supporter in the fight to keep the road off The Rye in the 1960s, and many of the meetings were held in her home.

Her humour and sense of fun matched that of her husband, Jim, and she contributed many ideas to his work as a renowned cartoonist.

For many years she sang in the choir of the Union Baptist Church, and in the High Wycombe Choral Society, and she was a skilled accompanist.

Margaret was a warm-hearted, cheerful and family-loving person, with a welcome for any who called at 13 London Road.

She will be greatly missed.

Elizabeth and George Rolfe

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 24 June 1995 Coach leaves the 'Stewart & Arnold' bus stop at 9.30am

Society Coach Outing: Tour of Devizes and the Caen flight of locks on the Kennet & Avon Canal. Book with Ron Sims (01494) 440800

Saturday 8 July 1995 10.30–12.30 Friends' Meeting House, London Road

Coffee Morning with Bring-and-Buy Stall. Come and meet your friends!

Saturday/Sunday 2/3 September 1995 The Rye

Wycombe Show Come and see us in the Conservation Marquee. Also Pann Mill is open from 12 noon. Teas from 3pm.

Sunday 17 September 1995 2.15pm Meet at the south porch of the Parish Church

Civic Trust Heritage Open Days 1995: Join us on the Heritage Trail around the town centre

Wednesday 18 October 1995 8pm Reggie Goves Centre, Pauls Row

Wycombe District Council Environmental Strategy Ian Westgate, Head of Environmental Services

Tuesday 16 January 1996 8pm Reggie Goves Centre

Work of the Tree Council Speaker to be announced