



High Wycombe Society

SECRETARY: J SCRUTON 17 LONDON ROAD HIGH WYCOMBE BUCKS
Telephone 25933



LORNA CASSIDY

"In the western view along the High Street, this building plays an important role in providing a successful visual foil to the classic architectural forms of the Guildhall and the Market House. It is for this reason that the building makes an important positive contribution to the visual quality of the Conservation Area wherein it is located. The loss of this visual element from the street scene would be materially contrary to the public interest, and, in my opinion, there would need to be a very powerful reason to justify demolition of the application building and the consequent loss of this particular feature" .

Extract from report of the Inspector in charge of the recent Public Inquiry about the Old Chequers.

MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER - IN PARTICULAR THE DECISIONS REGARDING THE H.7. INQUIRY and the OLD CHEQUERS.

We asked Peter Stoker of the A.404 Action Committee and a member of the Society if he would like to put down his thoughts about the H.7. battle, as he was more than anyone else responsible for the successful outcome. Here are Peter's thoughts about the issue:

H.7. Inquiry - We win the Ashes

This was the big one; the result we were all nervously awaiting because of the implications of this vast area being turned from farmland into urban sprawl. Professional opinions were that the development of H.7. would not only have a severe impact on the immediate area; it would also turn the possibility of a major road through Hughenden Valley, and aimed at the heart of our town, into an absolute and horrifying certainty.

So it was with great delight that we received the Minister's decision to reject all appeals by the would-be builders, and we take particular encouragement from the manner of this rejection. Mr. Crossland 'beefed up' the rather tentative rejection by the Inspector, referring to the significance of the Strategic Plan, the "Change and Choice" Structure Plan, and describing this White land site as having "Green Belt protection". Clearly this is an honorary status which we mis't now press strongly to be formalised.

This Inquiry had areas of confusion in it, largely due to the unusual situation of two appeals being heard concurrently. Lovell and Laing own most of H.7., but Terriers Farm belongs to Comben and Wakeling and their barrister very adroitly capitalised on this confusion by making sure that Lovell and Laing bore the brunt of the attack observing all the while that such objections as were made applied to his client's site very much less, if at all. The Inspector was apparently bemused by all this, for his summing up of evidence by objectors was not only scanty, but also inaccurate. We are already taking action to remedy this, for, comes the next Inquir we could live to regret not correcting misrepresentations like these.

A list of all those who helped win this famous victory would fill all this issue and half the next. If you want to meet them all, in a more relaxed mood, watch out for notice of a celebration get-together in the early Autumn.

H.2. - Clifford Farrant writes:

The Society was among many other associations and individuals who recently supported Cressex & District residents in their campaign to prevent outline planning permission being granted at this stage for the 100-acre area to the south of the town, lying between Cressex Road and the Motorway, known as H.2.

In this case the objection was not one of principle against houses as such, but that it was basically wrong that an application for a development as large as this - and as potentially expensive (some £4-8m has been quoted) - should be considered at all when no more is disclosed about the developers intentions (in this case the Council itself) than a few vague words in the public notice and a red line drawn on a plan around the margins of the area.

The residents wanted a lot more information to be made available, and constraints written into the application so that safeguards would be made against indiscriminate development of the area - before the irrevocable step was taken of outline permission being granted.

In the event, the objections were upheld and the matter deferred, first to a special one-item meeting of the Council planning committee and then to a further meeting in September to allow time for the residents representatives to meet with the planning officers and for more information to be made available.

OLD VERSUS NEW.

During the past decade we have seen in many cities and towns the demolition of very large numbers of older properties, mostly Victorian terraces. Although much of this may have been necessary, there has recently grown a widespread feeling at all levels that Local Authorities have gone too far with these policies. Many authorities have turned their backs on further clearances and have decided on a course of rehabilitation of older properties.

In the latest edition of the Civic Trust Newsletter occur the following passages about this problem:

"The jerry-built slums of the industrial revolution had to be demolished and no-one mourns their destruction. It is a different matter when the same bulldozer techniques are applied indiscriminately to areas of sub-standard housing which could be improved. This we have learnt in recent years. Comprehensive redevelopment involved not only the destruction of individual homes but also the obliteration of whole neighbourhoods - social entities which have evolved organically to meet human needs. It may take a year to build a new estate but a generation to mould a new community. Seen in this light, the case for conserving and rehabilitating existing housing stock is much more compelling: and indeed it enjoys Government endorsement. A recent White Paper condemned the "clean sweep" technique because of the "massive and unacceptable disruption of communities" it causes.

We are beginning to recognise that we must make more frugal use of finite physical resources, and this factor also tells in favour of conservation. Every house demolished requires lorry loads of rubble to be cleared away and deposited somewhere. Its replacement requires sand and gravel to be extracted, cement and clay to be burnt in kilns, steel joists and reinforcing rods to be rolled. All this takes a toll on the environment. Rehabilitation makes lesser physical demands, but in one sense at least it poses more problems. Assembly-line techniques just cannot be applied, and the designer has to give thought to a much wider range of needs. This in itself need be no disadvantage, for individuality of environment is now recognised as an asset and provides welcome relief from the "architecture" dictated by the needs of a travelling crane".

We have certainly suffered in this way in High Wycombe, but we believe there will be some new thinking about this problem on the part of our new District Council, and that in future there will be great reluctance to knock down our older properties and repeat the mistake of the Western Desert.

PLANNING AND TRAFFIC Hugh Osborn writes:

Apart from the decision about H.7., we have been encouraged by a number of favourable decisions since our last issue. Among these were:

Thanestead Farm, Loudwater. We supported the local authority and the Loudwater Residents' Association in their struggle to keep this precious piece of Loudwater

from unwise development. Fortunately the appeal by Smith and Lacey was refused by the Secretary of State . He stated that the land, part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, performed the primary Green Belt function of preventing the joining together of High Wycombe and Beaconsfield. This open view to the North of the A.40 is a much needed amenity for the people of Loudwater.

Rosemary Close, West Wycombe. A recent planning application for heavy development adjacent to the Rosemary Close has been refused by the District Council. This particular application is a good illustration of the dilemma facing a Planning group of a Local Amenity Society with regard to planning applications - the problem of choosing the right course. Whether to oppose the application head-on, or tackle it in a more oblique fashion. With many applications the way is clear; such things as threats to Green Belt or the Chiltern A.O.N.B. Others are not so simple and it is sometimes difficult to advance indisputable reasons for refusal. In the case of Rosemary Close we attacked the proposed density, the probable traffic problems, the overcrowding of the School which would arise, and suggested the possibility of building elsewhere. In this way we were able to give support to the local resident^ without sacrificing the principles by which the Group must work. Local residents are in a different position. For them it is all or nothing - a one-off affair - and it is right that they should fight with no-holds barred to protect their own environment. It is interesting to note that our Trees Group opposed the application completely. In dealing with the protection of trees they feel they must act without any inhibitions.

Wycombe Area Transportation Study.

The Society responded to the recent public participation pamphlet on the Wycombe Area Transportation Study, and below we print the whole of our comments. This is necessary, as they were a summary and defy any reduction if they are to make sense

1. We welcome the opportunity to take part, but regret the time allowed is totally inadequate to give us and our affiliated societies a chance for proper consideration - so that constructive well thought-out proposals may be made in detail.
2. On balance we favour proposals for more adequate public transport. We
s* believe there will have to be restrictions on the use of private vehicles
for travelling to work, where such travel crosses the Town and where it involves 'all day' parking.
3. We are very strongly opposed to any new Highway construction, where this may bring new roads into the Town. Any major highway schemes should be concentrated on:
 - a. By-passing the area (e.g. A 355 Amersham and Beaconsfield by-passes link to M 40).
 - b. Inner circulation relief (e.g. circus at Rail Station).
4. We wish to see the adoption of pedestrian precincts in the Town Centre (e.g. High Street, Church Street, White Hart Lane and Frogmoor).

5. We believe that traffic flows can be improved by traffic management schemes on existing roads. We suggest that experimental systems are tried out before being made "permanent" and before any expense is incurred on new road schemes. These could include:-
 - a One way streets
 - b. Tidal flows.
 - c. Restrictions on parking.
 - d. Sensible use of traffic lights.
6. We think more thought is needed on the requirements of pedestrians.
7. We feel that Rail/Road systems need greater coordination and that buses should be phased in with rail facilities (e.g. combined bus/rail station and inter-linking time tables),
8. Greater use could be made of the railway for a shuttle railcar service East - West between West Wycombe and Loudwater (and Bourne End). There should be intermediate stops at West Wycombe Road (near Desborough Avenue), Frogmoor, Rail/Bus Station, Wycombe Marsh (near Micklefield Road). Adequate car parking should be provided at Loudwater (and Bourne End) and West Wycombe for commuters.
9. We believe that the Town's bus services should be fully integrated and run under one Authority. Buses should run "cross town" and not require passengers to change for routes on major desire lines.
10. We are against "bus lanes". These will not improve traffic flows and this has proved to be the case elsewhere. Even where terrain is more suitable they are dangerous.
11. In the pedestrian precincts we have indicated, we believe vehicular, access should be allowed during limited hours only (e.g. 6 - 8 a.m. and 6-8 p.m. only).
12. Central car parks should be managed to encourage short term parking up to two hours. Increasing fees should be charged for longer duration, say double every hour after the first two hours (e.g. first 2 hours 5p, 3rd hour 10p, 4th hour 20p, 5th hour 40p, 6th hour 80p, etc.) "Reserved places" should not be allowed (except for invalid carriages). On street parking in Town Centre this should be discouraged. Parking at outer rail stations should be encouraged (e.g. suggested West Wycombe and Loudwater etc.).
13. We have a number of detailed suggestions we would be very pleased to discuss with the Highway Authority or their consultants. Time does not permit a detailed description here, but they include ideas on
 - a . Layout and. control of the pedestrian precincts.
 - b. Inner Central Wycombe, circulation system,
 - c. Details of the suggested shuttle railcar service for rapid transit of commuters.

At a District Council Planning Policy Committee Meeting held on 2nd July, some details were given of the preferred choice of those who responded to the pamphlet. Here is a summary:

In support of Strategy 1 - Highway orientated :	16%
In support of Strategy 2 - Public Transport orientated:	45%
In support of Strategy 3 - Intermediate - split evenly between Strategies 1 and 2:	29%

The remainder suggested variations of the Strategies.

There was a strong complaint at the meeting about the very small number who responded. This is hardly surprising in view of the very limited time allowed, the scarcity of pamphlets, and the common widespread public reluctance to grapple with strategic problems.

The final report by the Consultants is to be published in September, and will be submitted to the County Council for a decision on the strategy to be followed.

Quarterly Meeting - 19th July

This meeting, in the Guildhall, was devoted to transport problems. After a programme of films from the Roads Federation and British Rail, a panel of traffic experts from the two Bus Companies, County Engineer's Dept, and British Rail, answered questions covering all aspects of road and rail transport. Most of the thoughts expressed seemed to coincide with the Society's views printed above. The controlling factor is of course MONEY and lack of it will mean that many ambitious schemes will fly out of the window.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP

THE OLD CHEQUERS, Jim Cottrell writes :

The Chequers result has far reaching implications. Not only will the restored building add immeasurably to the street scene at the Western end of High Wycombe's broad High Street, but the successful outcome of the fight for its retention will bring renewed hope to those Amenity Societies throughout the Country who supported us financially and morally.

We would like to express our appreciation of the help given to us by the Chiltern Society whose expertise in the art of fund raising was greatly valued.

We also express gratitude to all our witnesses - some were paid but some gave their services free, Chris Wallis even foregoing a week of his annual holiday to appear on our behalf.

Above all we express gratitude to Walter Kraft, who not only dealt with the legal side of the Inquiry, but actually served in place of a barrister for about eight of the hearings. Had we paid him and the witnesses who appeared free, our costs would have been twice the amount they actually were. A breakdown of our expenditure and income as it now stands is:

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
From 210 Societies throughout the country	£927.70	Counsel	£1170.00
From an Appeal in the Daily Telegraph	£ 36.85	Ove Arup	£ 300.00
Anon.	£250.00	Mr. Millington	£ 110.00
Gifts from members of H. Wycombe Soc., Chiltern Soc., and Affiliated Socs, and fund raising efforts	£550.87	Mr. Barratt	£ 240.00
		Mr. Greiner	£ 150.00
Guarantors	£400.49	Printing, Duplicating, postage, photography,	£ 160.87
		Balance	£ 34.14
	£2165.91		£2165.91

The guarantors (£400.49) have, quite apart from this amount, given generously to the general fund, and we feel that they must be repaid. We are confident that our members and Affiliated Societies will be eager to take out their cheque books or purses and send a donation to the Treasurer, so that in our next Newsletter we can claim a financial victory. In these days of inflation, money is becoming of less and less value . By giving to the fund, you will in effect be helping to provide something of lasting value - the Old Chequers.

Treasurer : J. Cottrell, 13, London Road, High Wycombe.

The Old Toll House Walter Davies writes:

The damage caused by the accident last March is of course serious, but as it affects less than one-quarter of the structure, the Historic Works Group feel it is right to go ahead with plans for restoration.

As previously reported, we have been promised a grant from the County authority. However, members will have read that the Wycombe District Council have rejected our application for a grant from their funds, largely on the grounds that the work would amount to the building of a "replica", a misapprehension which we have endeavoured to correct through articles in the local press.

The building is insured by the Cricket/Sports Club and the insurers' loss adjusters have sought the views of the Society as a party interested in the restoration. We have replied suitably and await developments.

Meanwhile, we are asking the Pilgrim Trust, who have expressed interest in the Toll House, whether they can offer any financial support as an **E.A.H.Y.** project. The position is a critical one, largely because the grant expected from the District Council has not been forthcoming.

European Architectural Heritage Year Jack Scruton writes:

Advisory Committee

We have suggested to the District Council the setting up of a. small Advisory Committee to stimulate interest and action in E.A.H.Y. The Planning Policy Committee has agreed with the proposal, with representatives from the District Council, Planning Dept., Chamber of Trade and High Wycombe Society. The proposal will now go to the full Council for consideration.

Town Trail As part of the campaign for European Architectural Heritage Year the Society hopes to publish a Town Trail in the near future. Jim Cottroll is preparing the script and drawings, and Lorna Cassidy has prepared a cover design. The Trail will cover the Conservation Area from the Parish Church to Funges Farm down at Bassetsbury. It will be in handy pamphlet form and we hope to keep the cost down to a low figure.

We hope to sell many copies, not for the sake of profit, but in order to kindle an ^ interest in the town among local people and visitors.

TREES GROUP Barbara Rippington writes:

Parks Department and Tree Planting

Since the last Newsletter we have had a very useful and interesting talk with Mr. Bowen, the new Wycombe District Parks Manager, and learned that the size of the area encompassed by his job is breathtaking, stretching from near Wendover almost to Henley. Whilst for the present the Parks Dept, feels that sufficient planting has been undertaken in what was the Wycombe Borough, further planting is hoped for in the Rural district. With so much effort being put into planting trees, help is warmly welcomed in keeping them well watered in any season, so please don't hesitate if trees are planted in your area. Two or three buckets of water a day will help these trees to become established. Their struggles can be seen when we look at newly planted trees this year and see the poor foliage. They need all the help they can get.



Environmental Studies Exhibition

The Trees Group displayed a stand at the Schools' Environmental Studies Exhibition at Holmer Green in early July. The Schools' exhibits were outstanding, and we learned much from them, including the importance of good display stands. Heath Robinson would have found ours interesting - and of being sure all exhibits are correctly labelled. There's sure to be someone more expert hovering around*.

Tree Nursery

Our trees at the Magpie Wood nursery bed are growing well. Volunteers to help with weed and nettle clearing at evenings or weekends are welcome. Turn up with sickle and have a go, or contact the Secretary at High Wycombe 26616.

Dutch Elm Disease

We are sorry to say that Dutch Elm Disease continues to thrive. Recently some affected trees have been felled on the Rye and these have been a sad loss. A hard winter would be welcome to strike out this growing threat.

Tree Walks

A very enjoyable walk to Marlow Common, led by Pat Howard, took place on Sunday July 14th. We all met for picnic tea, although the Rippingtons had an odd means of "walking" there - on wheels'. However everyone took part in the walk back. New friend who joined us on this walk were especially welcome.

Our next walk will be on Saturday, August 31st, at Wendover Woods. Meet (with car, if possible) at Fryers Lane, which is a turning off the West Wycombe Road leading into Desborough Recreation Ground. Bring a picnic tea .

On Sunday, 29th September, we are going to visit by car the largest BBONT Nature Reserve, which is at Bix Bottom, near Henley. Meet at Turnpike Way, Cressex, at 2 p.m. Bring a picnic tea.

Please join us on these two outings; they should be very interesting.

WATER GROUP

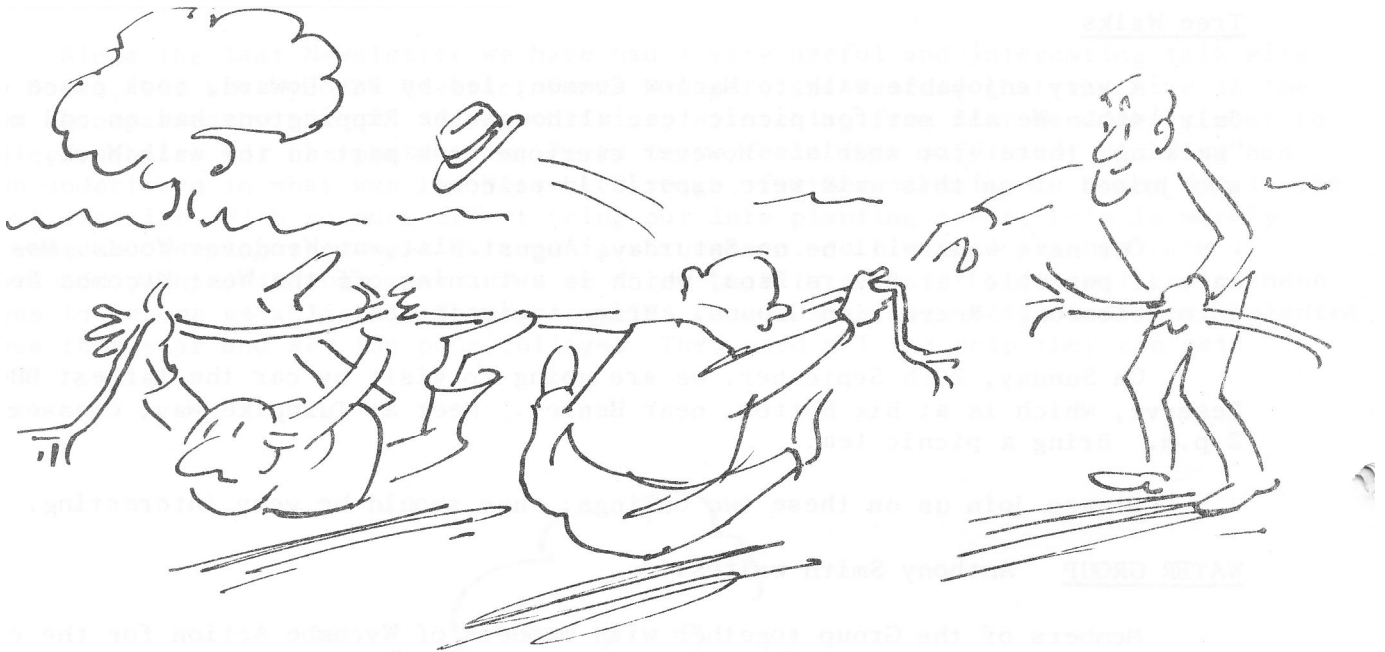
Anthony Smith writes:

Members of the Group together with members of Wycombe Action for the community spent the morning of Saturday June 8th in a river clearing operation above the culvert. We were struck by two features of the Wye in this stretch: the amount of totally needless fouling of the river (in this case the greater part was plastic waste from a riverside factory), and the potential charm of the river notwithstanding. We would like to express our thanks to the District Council for removing the rubbish that we took out of the river. We hope to return for a further attack on this part of the Wye later in the summer. When the south bank of this stretch is finally redeveloped, it could well incorporate a very pleasant riverside walk.

CANAL TRIPS Derek Woods writes:

The Chilterns have always contained and been associated with men of vision, and usually they have succeeded when the odds have been heavily against them. This time we failed*. On our canal trip to Hungerford on July '7th our boat, "The Avon", carrying 53 Wycombe souls, foundered on the mud, some 200 yards or so short of Hungerford Wharf. It was an embarrassment to be shared with the boat owner, for here we were with two Government Transport Inspectors aboard, making the first public trip on the Avon and Kennet Canal from Newbury through to Hungerford. Previously, public licensed boats had been obliged to terminate at Kintbury. Willing helpers tried to pull the boat off the mud, and in doing so the line broke several times, sending Wycombians down like skittles - that is except for your Hon. Secretary, Jack Scruton. Is it possible that he was not pulling? Anyway it brought a touch of adventure to the second of the two canal trips which have been run this season.

Our first trip was on May 18th, when we hired the horse-drawn barge "Kennet Valley" for a trip between Newbury - Kintbury, and return. On both dates we were ^ fortunate in having extremely good weather. All those taking part enjoyed themselves on this beautiful and peaceful stretch of the Canal.



OTHER SOCIETIES

A particular strength of the Society lies in the surprisingly large number of local organisations who are affiliated members; there are now thirty five associations and societies who receive our Newsletter and who support the activities of the Society in various ways . We give below news of just two of these Societies, which members themselves might be interested in joining.

High Wycombe History Society

This Society was founded in 1961 as a result of interest created by a course of W.E.A. lectures on local history by Mr. L.J. Ashford, author of the "History of High Wycombe from its origins to 1880".

The Society meets regularly at Bassetsbury Manor at 8 p.m. on the third Thursday in the month. The programme includes illustrated talks on local history and allied

subjects. Visitors and new members are welcome. Annual Subscription: £1.00. Family subscriptions: £1.50. Hon. Secretary: Mr. W.A. Newall, Anglefield, 2 Plomer Hill, High Wycombe. Telephone: H.W. 213 32.

Old Age Pension Association (High Wycombe Branch)

The High Wycombe Branch of the O.A.P. Association has just become affiliated to this Society and we welcome their support. Their membership has now reached the 1000-mark and they are undoubtedly going to have a real influence locally. Jim Tanner, the enthusiastic Hon. Secretary, tells us that there is a potential 32,000 members in this area! New members are welcome and they need not be old age pensioners. The annual subscription is only 25p. The Hon. Secretary's address is:

A.J. Tanner, Esq.. 28 Terryfield Road, High Wycombe.
Tel: H.W. 29014

List of Hon. Secretaries of Affiliated Societies

Enclosed with copies of the Newsletter addressed to Affiliated Societies is a list of Hon. Secretaries. This may be useful to the Secretaries of the Societies concerned, and to Residents' Associations in particular. All Secretaries are asked to check the information given and keep the list readily available. Please notify any errors or amendments to the Hon. Secretary of the Society.

Newsletters from Affiliated Societies

A number of Newsletters are received regularly from Residents' Associations and we find these most interesting and instructive. It is thought that copies might be distributed to other Residents' Associations. Good ideas are worth spreading and could easily take root elsewhere with benefit to local residents. Such a distribution might persuade all Residents' Associations of the value of Newsletters in maintaining interest in the affairs of each Association.

EXHIBITIONS

Our Exhibitions Group is hoping to stage three Exhibitions as follows:

Flackwell Heath Carnival Exhibition - Saturday 24th August.
Booker Memorial Hall Fete - Monday 26th August.
Wycombe Show - Saturday, 7th September.

Any help in staging these would be welcome, especially in manning the one at the Wycombe Show. Please contact the Hon. Secretary. We hope that many of our members will attend the Show. This is always a great day out for the whole family and you can get tickets in advance at cheap rates. These can be obtained from the Wycombe Show Office, 15 High Street, High Wycombe.

Quite apart from these Society events, Lorna Cassidy is herself organising two further Exhibitions at the Guildhall on August 30th and 31st. Details are as follows:

Carrington Room. A display of material for the joint Mrs. Cassidy/Peter Stoker scheme for the centre of Loudwater. This scheme has been entered for the Sunday Times National Competition.

Also exhibited will be a collection of prints and drawings illustrating Wycombe and District during the last 10 years.

It is also hoped to display a collection of drawings by Jim Cottrell for a Town Trail to be published by the Society.

Shelburne Room A Poster Competition, displaying Children's posters about the new Wing of the Wycombe General Hospital.

MEETINGS

Annual General Meeting

This was held on 26th April, and it was very encouraging to see such a large attendance. Patrick Reyntiens, our President, was the speaker, and his talk - a delightful mixture of the serious and light-hearted - was greatly appreciated. He spoke about European Architectural Heritage Year and its relation to High Wycombe, and he used coloured slides to illustrate the many opportunities which could be seized upon. The talk was followed by the usual election of officers and Committee members. Details are as follows:

President:	Mr. P. Reyntiens.
Vice-President:	Mr. Connor-Wilson.
Chairman:	Mr. E. Kearney.
Vice-Chairman:	Mr. J. Wilson.
Hon. Secretary:	Mr. J. Scruton.
Hon. Treasurer:	Mr. M. Turner.
Committee :	Mesdames Alexander, Clowes and Roe, and Messrs Farrant, Howard, Kraft, Neal, Newall, Osborn, Rippington, Sims and Taylor.

Next Quarterly Meeting

This will be held in the Guildhall on Friday, 18th October, 1974, beginning at 7.45 p.m. Please make a note in your diary.

Social Evening

We are hoping to arrange a Social evening on Saturday 21st September, with music and refreshments (including wine). We are at the moment trying to find a suitable place, but it would be a great help if members and friends would let us know SOON if they would like to buy tickets. We are not sure how much to charge yet - we aim to merely break even. We guess it will be somewhere between 75p and £1. If you would like to go, please tell one of the following how many tickets you would like

Mr. J. Cottrell. H.W. 29680	Mr. W.A. Newall. H.W. 21332
Mrs. C. Farrant. H.W. 29411	Miss M. Nash. H.W. 28488

MEMBERSHIP

Finally - and we hope you have read this far - we must mention Membership and renewal of subscriptions. The increasing cost of postage, telephone calls, paper, printing, and many other essentials, is straining to the utmost our limited finances. We are grateful to those members who give so freely of their time and money, but we depend mainly on the payment of subscriptions. If we are to take part in the full range of work for the community, we must have an assured income. If you have not yet paid your subscription, please do so as soon as possible to Mrs. E. Roe, 3, London Road, High Wycombe. Tel. High Wycombe 32575.

If you can persuade any of your friends to join the Society they would be most welcome.