

THE HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

newsletter

NUMBER 198

SPRING 2021

Town and Country living



An unexpected side-effect of lockdown for many town-dwellers has been a growing appreciation of the outdoors gained through essential exercise sessions. In January, the BBC's "Countryfile" programme visited the Chilterns where Matt Baker tried his hand at the art of bodging under the expert tutelage of our president, Stuart King. The programme also featured Dr Wendy Morrison from the Chilterns Conservation Board, who is soon to give a talk to the Society on the "Beacons of the Past" project (see p12). This project has used LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) to map the Chilterns and is now turning to an army of 'Citizen Scientists' to analyse the results and identify hitherto unknown archaeological features.

The grounds of Pann Mill are teeming with spring flowers, providing an oasis of calm and promising a brighter future in the sunshine. There's plenty of water in the river, but it's still too soon to say when we will next be able to host an Open Day.

Meanwhile, due to Covid restrictions High Streets all over the country are suffering with a lack of footfall, but there is some positive news about steps being taken to breathe life into our town centre. (see p4). And we are pleased to report that Gemma Shinh from our Planning Group has acquired a new role as a director of HWBidCo. Civic Voice wants the Government to rethink plans to make it easier to convert retail properties to residential use. We welcome increases in resident numbers in the centre but are concerned about some losses of amenities in the outskirts.



The future of the Carrot and Coriander, until very recently a reliable outlet for Pann Mill flour, is sadly in the balance. A planning application seeks to demolish the whole row of shops in Gordon Road and build a new block of apartments in their place. The shops front a triangular green which only recently lost its local pub, the Gordon Arms (already converted into flats). Around 100 objections have been submitted by regular shoppers and local residents who appreciate their amenity value.

Jackie Kay

...caring about our town: past, present and future

Registered Charity No. 257897

Honorary Secretary: Tony Hatton, 41 Bassetsbury Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 1QZ. Tel: (01494) 445071

The State of the Society

THIS YEAR we propose to hold our Annual General Meeting (AGM) online **via Zoom on Friday 18th June 2021 at 7.30 pm**. Ongoing Covid restrictions have so far at least prevented us from arranging to meet in a more normal manner. This time last year Society members may recall that we had confidently planned a more conventional AGM which could not then go ahead. We had got as far as circulating draft minutes of the 2019 AGM along with the normal AGM notice and forms for subscription renewals and nominations of officers and trustees. But by May, we were obliged to cancel our plans. We circulated the accounts for 2019-2020 which were the basis of our Annual Return to the Charity Commission and we published our formal Annual Report for (2019-2020) on our website.

Between now and 18th June all Society members should receive a formal communication from our Hon. Secretary regarding the AGM. This will be sent via email to those members who have given us an email address for communications.

We are very conscious that not all our members are computer users. To be as inclusive as possible we plan to make the draft accounts available in advance of the AGM, so that those unable to use Zoom can ask questions or comment in advance of the meeting if they wish to do so. In addition, we have been discussing whether it would be worthwhile to provide the means to vote by proxy, and we would welcome any members' views on this subject.

We are not aware of any issues likely to result in motions at the AGM that might result in close voting, but there is always the possibility of an election for an officer role (if we are in the fortunate position of having more than one candidate) and nominations are permitted at any time up to the start of the AGM.

Our formal Annual Report will appear on our website in due course. Its format may be slightly changed to take account of a new Governance code issued in December 2020.

We therefore appeal to Society members (and representatives of organisation members) to consider who they would like to represent the Society as officers and trustees in 2021-22. Some of our existing trustees have already indicated that they would like to hand over their responsibilities to new board members.

Our most long-serving trustee, Jackie Kay, is approaching the limit the Charity Commission considers good practice, having served as a trustee since 2011.

Wanted: New Chairman

Since the AGM in 2019 the role of Chairman has remained vacant. In accordance with the wishes of that meeting the trustees have since collectively fulfilled the role of Society Chairman and we are grateful to Malcolm Connell who has chaired the trustees' meetings. In recent times, whilst many of the Society's normal activities have been dormant, the Chairman vacancy has not been a problem, but as we emerge from the restraints of the pandemic, to avoid the sort of issues that inevitably arise with a leaderless group, there is no doubt that it would now be helpful to have a new Chairman elected by the membership.

Wanted: New Secretary

The constitution we adopted in 2013 specifies a normal maximum tenure of five years for all officer roles. For the past two years we have invoked an emergency clause to enable our Hon Secretary, Tony Hatton, to remain in office when there was no other candidate. Tony has previously indicated his willingness to stand down if a suitable candidate is found.

Wanted: New Treasurer in waiting

This year our Treasurer, if re-elected, is set to embark on his fifth year of service. Colin Hingston, himself, says that now would be an ideal time to find a new Treasurer who could perhaps initially join the board as a trustee. He is keen to ensure an orderly handover to his successor – and has also indicated a willingness to stay on himself as a trustee when he relinquishes his current financial responsibilities as there are other roles which he would be willing to undertake.



Wanted: Officers and Trustees

While much of the work of the Society is undertaken by its Groups (both long-standing and project-related), the trustees have ultimate responsibility for steering the Society and ensuring that it is fulfilling its charitable objects.



Where are we going?

The Society has always been guided by the interests and actions of its members. In the past, our regular public meetings, the AGM and the Pann Mill Open Days have all provided opportunities in which ideas could be floated and opinions sought.

In the current circumstances it is more difficult to stay in touch with all our members, but we still welcome your suggestions and views on where the Society should be heading, and, most of all, your participation in making things happen.

We were delighted that many of you supported our first experimental Zoom “social” in January. Building on the success of that venture, our Treasurer has compiled a programme of Zoom talks which we hope you will find of interest. For those who wish to linger, there will also be an opportunity to mingle electronically with fellow attendees.

Zoom has helped enable many Society activities to continue, but many of us are now yearning for a time when we can resume more normal interactions. When that time comes, we will once again need volunteers. So please consider what you might be able to do.

Finally, we'd still like a little of your money!

Subscription renewals fall due on **6th April** each year. We are grateful to all members who have maintained regular payments throughout these unusual times, but we are also aware that some of you prefer to pay in person at our events. As there have been no such opportunities since March 2020, there may be some subscriptions for 2020-2021 still “sitting on the mantelpiece”. Now is the time to take action to ensure that you are in good-standing and entitled to vote at the forthcoming AGM. If you're unsure when you last paid, our Treasurer, Colin Hingston will be happy to tell you. You can contact him via email on colinehingston@aol.com.

We look forward to seeing you in the year ahead.

The Trustees

How to pay your sub for 2020-21

Rates unchanged since last year:

Individual member £8

Family membership £12

Retired pensioner £4

If you haven't already done so, please set up a standing order with your bank. Alternatively, pay by bank transfer.

Details:

High Wycombe Society

Account No. 90446688

Sort code 40-24-17

We can accept cheques, though trips to the bank are not frequent, send to:

Colin Hingston, HWS Treasurer

65 Dean Garden Rise

High Wycombe

HP11 1RF

If you need to pay by cash please contact the Treasurer to make arrangements.

Organisation Membership

We recognise that many local groups and societies share our interests in enhancing the locality. Our constitution provides for such organisations to become members of the Society. We currently ask for a small membership subscription of between £10 and £25 based on the size of the organisation.

Organisations who join in this way can nominate a single individual to act on their behalf at the AGM and nominated individuals are also eligible to serve as trustees of the Society if they wish to do so.

Further details are available from Society Trustee, Brian Tranter, who has served as a trustee for a number of years and as the nominated representative of Booker Common and Woods Protection Society (BCWPS)

He can be contacted directly via email on btranter@btinternet.com

To update your contact details

It helps the Society if we can communicate with you by email. We promise not to bombard you with unwanted emails, but we would like to be able to invite you to events and advise you of late changes to arrangements if necessary.

If you have a new email address you would be happy for us to use or have just not previously told us then we would appreciate having a note of it. Please just send an email to membership@highwycombesociety.org.uk and remember to tell us who you really are if, as is often the case, your address is not blatantly obvious.

Planning Matters

NOW IS A TIME of great inactivity for many, as we endure seemingly endless social and travel restrictions. And yet, for others, there is plenty of action: not just for NHS workers and frazzled teachers, but also for builders in High Wycombe! Members of the Planning Group have been pleased to observe some much longed-for projects finally making headway. The most elusive prize of all – that to be gained by deculverting and restoring our precious river – still lies tantalisingly out of reach. Capable of making a game-changing difference to the look, feel and broad appeal of the town, it is a prize worth pursuing. Much damage was caused in our town during the 1960s by demolishing buildings and covering the river. But a dynamic group of key voices in the town have come together, all pressing as one for the same goal, and steadily the council is beginning to see the potential advantages of making the town more attractive and natural again. Expect to hear more!

Regeneration Every town centre has experienced difficult times over the last few months, so it is very welcome news that High Wycombe has been successful in its bid for help from the Government's Future High Street Fund. After initially applying for £17.2m, we understand that £11.8m has been allocated for the regeneration of High Wycombe town centre (albeit subject to a final bid for the lower sum). The money is expected to arrive in March 2021 and must be spent within three years. It will be used to purchase empty or under-utilised properties and refurbish them fit for modern day use. Excellent examples of how such a scheme has already worked are the Mad Squirrel on Church Street and The Works on the High Street.

Regeneration is the buzzword about town with the aim to make the town centre a thriving and inviting place to visit. A number of new businesses have opened or are opening, which is a real boost for the town. They include: 25 High Street, a flexible workspace hub; Kubik Caffè, an independent coffee shop with reportedly the best coffee in town, at 29 High Street; B & M stores, a national discount retailer at the old Woolworths building; Smart, a study/tuition centre at 5-6 High Street; and Creams Café, a coffee shop and dessert parlour on White Hart Street

The Charter Market, which has held a pivotal role in the history of the town, is undergoing its own renaissance. The past few months have seen the offering greatly improve with stalls selling eco-friendly "refill and re-use" household and personal goods, artisan cheeses, fresh fish and Italian food and wine. The Market has potential to be a significant driver of footfall on to the High Street complementing the enhancements to the High Street itself. Suggestions to improve the Market further include: specialist markets like the vegan market held in December; a pop-up food court area; artisan products and crafts; and the purchasing of uniform stall canopies so that the market is more aesthetically pleasing.

Brunel Shed We are pleased to report that work has now resumed on site at the Brunel Shed at High Wycombe Railway Station. Now owned by

Buckinghamshire Council, it is due for preservation and conversion for retail use, particularly by commuters. We became concerned when the site was quite quiet back in October but the Project Manager, Richard Ackerley assured us that detail design and specialist procurement was happening and is still on target for completion by the late summer. Key works carried out to date include:

- Scaffolding to the existing shed and protection of existing roof finishes;
- (Ongoing) removal of existing roof finishes and repair/replacement of sarking timbers;
- Restoration of existing windows and joinery in the original ticket office;
- Excavation and grading of existing ground to rail track level;
- (Ongoing) drainage works including the excavation of Amersham Hill elevation for new drainage attenuation tanks;
- Procurement of new Glulam Timber frame and Cross Laminated Timber structure for new build extension



Brisk trade on a sunny day

Photo David Snoxell

Rye Boathouse and Sensory Garden The takeaway service from the new replacement boathouse/café is already proving popular with those who choose to "exercise" on The Rye. We were interested to hear of a possible project to create a 'sensory garden' nearby and look forward to seeing more detailed plans. If it goes ahead we hope that sufficient resource will be made available for its upkeep so that it is an asset to its surroundings.

Planning Group

Wheatsheaf Progress

THE OLDEST BUILDING in our High Street, a three-storey timber-framed building dating back to 1399, which was formerly the Wheatsheaf Inn, is currently shielded from public view as it undergoes a sensitive transformation. Over the years the building has had many uses. It has thereby lost many of its original features, but also gained some interesting alterations.

I am pleased to report that our contractors, Ward & Co., started work on the building in November. Based in Ibstone, they are specialists in historic conservation. The building is now shrouded in scaffolding and the roof is being retiled.



A glimpse inside. Photo: Courtesy Andy Lam & Oliver Barbieri, inhouse film crew at the Wheatsheaf Project.

More stripping-out has revealed a few surprises including an inserted tie-beam (presumably to strengthen the structure - you may have noticed a slight lean!), a door communicating with 5 Church Square at first-floor level, and a medieval wattle and daub partition at the back of what was Annabelles' shop, where there was also a somewhat startling lack of support for the truncated chimney stack on the wall with 4 High Street.

These discoveries have caused some scratching of heads, not to say various changes to the layout for the proposed cocktail bar. Things are rather more complicated than they were in 1399 with a rigorous regulatory system to satisfy, not helped by the "intermingling" of the building with its neighbours. So our project manager, Dr James Moir, has been involved in myriad discussions with Bucks Council (our landlord as well as regulator), builders,

surveyors, architects, structural engineers, sound engineers, adjoining owners and tenants whilst keeping our major funder, the Architectural Heritage Fund, and prospective tenant, Lewis O'Shea, in the loop.

We are particularly grateful for the support and guidance of the Council's conservation officer, not to mention our neighbours who are suffering the inconvenience of the scaffolding on their premises. Despite COVID the project remains on schedule for a re-opening of the Wheatsheaf in September this year. We hope to get the Trust's website up and running with more information shortly and will also be installing a new history display on the hoarding.

Meanwhile you can follow the progress of the project on Lewis O'Shea's Facebook page "The Wheatsheaf Project".

Marian Miller
Bucks Historic Building Trust

P.S. an old roof timber lying in the loft space was found to include the name W. Hearn and dated 1871. Did 17-year-old plumber, William Hearn perhaps carve his name when working on the property? His father kept the Half-Moon pub in Oxford Street.



W Hearn inscription on old roof timber

Photo James Moir

Letters to the Editor



Wycombe's Own Coinage

Re. Mark Page's article "Wycombe's own coinage" in the Winter newsletter I was particularly interested in Richard Lucas's tokens. I am no collector but I recently succumbed to the temptation to buy a similar token, despite being an eBay novice. Mark's deduction that the letter "D" was Lucas's wife's initial is indeed correct since he had married Dorothy Fishe in 1640. Their marriage settlement is at Bucks Archives (BAS 83/45).

Dorothy was Lucas's second wife. In 1633 he had married Katherine Brazbridge with whom he seems to have had four children. Ferdinand died very young but his son John and daughters Katherine and Mary survived him. Richard's wife Katherine was buried only days after giving birth to Katherine junior. It seems that Richard wasted no time in finding a new bride!

The parish register shows that Richard and Dorothy also had four children, two of whom died in infancy. Only their daughter Dorothy was to survive both her parents. Dorothy junior is the real reason for my interest as she lived in Church Square (then the Hogmarket) just around the corner from the former Wheatsheaf at 2/3 High Street. She married William Kidder, a Quaker mealman from Southwark, but that's another story.

Richard Lucas was mayor of the Borough three times and his tumultuous political career is described in Ashford's history (chapter 6). He was evidently not shy about airing his views; his other trade tokens bore the motto "Rather dead than disloyal". Richard lived in Easton Street and was a man of property. In 1640 he was described as a lace-buyer, a lucrative business, but he seems also to have married well (twice!). When he died in 1675 he left several properties in the town to his children and made his daughter Mary, married to John Lane, his executrix. It seems that there are already several tokens like mine in museums so I think I shall keep my little bit of Wycombe history; it will remind me how lucky I am to live in more peaceful times.

Marian Miller

Oohwaa!

I WAS fascinated by the piece from John Moore and his observations on the way that long-standing Wycombe people speak. I do not know how long John has lived in Wycombe, but when I moved out of the town more than 40 years ago, "Wycombe", as a local dialect, was already dying fast. I was born in High Wycombe before the war. My parents were both born in High Wycombe before the First World War and they were of good High Wycombe stock. In our house we spoke "Wycombe".

This is not to say that the family did not understand people from other parts of the country. I have long been interested to observe that, whatever their local accent and usage of words, people in England almost always understand one another.

My very good friend George is a product of a good public school and Cambridge University. He speaks English in the very cultured way that you would expect of an elderly gentleman with his background and upbringing. If I were to ask George what was inside his head, he may look at me a little oddly, but he would reply, "My brain". My parents would have understood perfectly, although to them, the way he says "my" is the way that they would say "May", (the merry month) and the way he says "brain" is the name of the dull colour "brown". My parents would know perfectly well that George was not telling them that he was besotted with May Brown, the girl next door.

At the start of the war Wycombe took in hundreds of evacuees from London. As war progressed, the town hosted workers, soldiers and airmen from different parts of the world as well as from all parts of the UK. Some of these good people made their home in the town and never left. Perhaps this was one reason why "Wycombe" has become diluted.

Early in the war Chairborough Road was changed from a rough stone track to a properly surfaced road. Part of the improvement was to put in curbs. For a while, the curbs stood proud of the other surface levels so they were perfect for children to walk along to show off their balancing skills. This was behaviour not to be tolerated by the workmen who had just set these curbs. "Geddorf on it!" shouted one of the workers. This order totally confused a young evacuee.

There is one expression that I have loved for a very long time. It is the local version of the Scottish "Och Aye!" In old Wycombe, this becomes (and spelling is difficult): Oohwaa! Yes I know, the real Wycombe word cannot be spelt, but you know when you hear it.

Eric Peddle

Tributes have been received to Albert Ivermee whose death was reported at the Zoom social meeting in January.

Albert Ivermee (1927-2020)

MANY MEMBERS will know of Albert Ivermee's support over many years for the High Wycombe Society until his declining mobility and family commitments denied us the pleasure of his company at events and happenings. Albert was a person with many and varied interests: He volunteered at the McAlpine Estate private railway museum at Fawley and also contributed with enthusiasm his engineering and D-I-Y skills to our household's garden compost enclosure and kitchen shelving. When these solutions to domestic requirements had been found, a cup of tea and a chat with Albert was enlivened by his reminiscences of local history and local personalities he had encountered. Albert will be remembered for his friendship and consideration to others during his lifetime and his green finger success in our garden.

Diana and Roger Lawson

ALBERT IVERMEE was one of those people you always wished to get to know better but time runs out. When he first left school, he was employed in assembly work of the Linten Aerial camera, here in High Wycombe, one of the finest of its type at the time. He told me he was directed to work there, this was at the beginning of Bird Cage Walk, the showroom for Norman Reeves garage in those days and there employed on the top secret work.

Ian Simmons

ALBERT IVERMEE was quite a character. He worked in one of the furniture factories near where Morrison's now is. He was full of stories about working there, and what caused the several major fires. He was also a Newsletter postman, and created a list of the town's pubs.

Chris Woodman

Past newsletters mention his voluntary work at Wycombe Museum and the fact that he led the Water trail back in 2002.

Railway Relics

Having read in the Autumn 2020 newsletter about the relics of the railway in Wycombe and Chinnor, I wondered whether you would be interested in a picture of a similar relic near Wheatley station where, incidentally, Avery (William and son, Henry) had a sawmill supplying timber for the furniture industry in Wycombe by the GWR line connecting the two.



I lived in Wycombe for 43 years before moving to Wheatley in 2013 and becoming involved in Wheatley Village Archive.

See www.wheatleyarchive.org.uk for many details of the Avery family.

Stephanie Cox

Adding Life to Dry Facts

In David Snoxell's account of the Civil War in the Winter 2020 edition of this Newsletter he did not mention that in June 1643 Col. Sir John Urry for the Royalists made a raid on Wycombe and the Parliamentary garrison withdrew to Beaconsfield.

In December 1643 a Cavalier raiding party sacked part of the town, burning and looting houses not displaying the royalist colours including the Mayor Edward Guy's house. His wife protested about the lack of fight in the local men, got on a horse and chased the raiders demanding her silver back! She was captured at Saunderton and offered back for ransom at £45.00. Her husband refused to pay, so she moved in with the raiders. In the following January the raiders announced they would return and burn Wycombe unless the town paid £40.00. This time they did pay but Mrs Guy did not return home.

It's the fun bits that add life to any story and lift dry facts to enjoyable listening - always found that when lecturing (at Oxford Brookes Architecture).

Tony Mealing

Editor's response: David Snoxell continues his thorough examination of the various Civil War sources available to local historians on the next page. This gives some substance to the mayor's wife's kidnapping but suggests that other details may be embellishments.

Wycombe and the Civil War

IN THE WINTER 2020 Newsletter I set out to separate fact from popular fiction by critically examining available sources for events alleged to have occurred in Wycombe during the First English Civil War (1642-1647). I focused attention on two propaganda pamphlets and the effects of their misinterpretation over time including a mythical battle in 1642 for which there is no reliable evidence. My analysis did not fully account for all the Wycombe tales told of this period, some of which can be found in a very colourful account of events in Ivan Sparkes 'The Book of Wycombe' published in 1979. In this article I shall start by examining one of his sources: the Journal of Sir Samuel Luke, Scoutmaster to the Earl of Essex, 1642-44. I shall also consider an article by Francis Colmer which appeared in the Bucks Free Press in November 1935 which throws more light on the level of understanding of local historians of his time.

Sir Samuel Luke controlled a network of Parliamentary scouts (spies). His Journal for 1642-44 was published by the Oxfordshire Records Society in 3 parts, between 1950 and 1953 and within its 272 pages there are 35 references to Wycombe and West Wycombe.

There is no mention in the Journal of a battle on the Rye in 1642. If it had taken place it is unlikely that it would have escaped mention in this unique primary source. References to 'Wickham' are mainly reports from scouts on gossip about Royalist movements, picked up in conversation with locals in public houses and inns. Interestingly one scout referred to the town as 'High Wickham'.

The Journal reports on 26 June 1643 that "forces which were yesterday at Wickham" [a reference to Colonel Urry's raid] "threaten to be there again very speedily and intend to plunder both it and Marlow". It also records several threats and instances of pillage and plunder against Wickham by the Royalists.

According to Ivan Sparkes: On 13th December 1643 there was a further raid on Wickham in which four 'townesmen' were taken prisoner and the Mayor's wife held for a ransom of £45.

Sir Samuel Luke's entry for 13th December 1643 reports first that: "James Carey came from Marlow and saith that there were about 1000 of the Kings horse yesterday, about 40 or 50 of them came yesterday to Wickham and plundred some howses in the towne and carryed some of the inhabitants prisoner along with them, and they intend to make a garrison towne of Marlowe and stopp all the passage uppon the Thames".

The story of the Mayor's wife appears later on the same page: "William Harryes came this day from Wickham and saith that there came about 30 of the Cavalyers thither yesterday, and plundred some howses in the towne and carryed away 4 of the townesmen. That the Maiors wife of Wickham followeing them for her goods, they detayne her as a prisoner and will not release her unlesse they have 45 li. [£45] paid eyther by her or some other for her. That they are fortifieing of Greenland howse neere Henley, and the reason is, as it is reported,

because they intend to stopp the barges, and prevent them from carrying of billetts and faggotts and all manner of tymber to London. That Wickham is assessed at 5 li [£5]. a weeke to be paid every Fryday, and they are to send every day 20 men for 4 dayes to helpe to make upp the workes at Greenland howse".

This entry appears to be the only contemporary source for the story which has been somewhat embellished by speculation in recent years.

A final reference concerning Wickham is the entry on 25th January 1644: "That the Cavallyers threaten to plunder and burne the town of Wickham if they bring not in 40 li. [£40] tomorrow, which they have assessed them to pay." The Journal concludes on 29th March 1644.

Francis Colmer was a well-known painter of Wycombe scenes, an antiquarian and archaeologist, 1873-1967, who wrote regularly for the BFP (see Spring 2017 edition of the Newsletter). In November 1935 he penned an article entitled 'Records of Battle of Wycombe Rye.' The article is an imaginative account, not lacking in detail but short on records and sources. Colmer notes, "The only information we have is derived from a contemporary pamphlet and the letters of Captain Hayes and Goodwin in the British Museum."

The contemporary pamphlet is clearly "A Glorious and Happy Victory", which we now know was Parliamentary propaganda. Hayes is mentioned in the pamphlet which claimed 900 casualties of which 300 were dead. Colmer comments, "There is no record (of deaths) in the parish register, and we can only suppose that those who perished in this action on December 7th 1642 lie under some of the mounds adjoining the Rye and the lower slopes of Daws Hill Park".

No evidence has yet been found for Colmer's supposition of mass burials. The article shows, however, that the pamphlet was known about in the thirties whereas I had previously suggested it was Sparkes, 40 years later, who had first publicised the battle locally.

David Snoxell

About Time

A NEW FEATURE has been added to the High Wycombe Society website in the form of a Timeline, thanks to Society Trustee Brian Tranter who discovered a useful tool for the purpose. Based on the work Ann Simone undertook 13 years ago to mark the Society's 40th anniversary, and the updates added by Eileen Walters and myself for the Golden Anniversary celebrations, this latest incarnation, being online, is now readily accessible by anyone with internet access on a computer. Please take a look, enjoy, and let us know what you think! It can be directly accessed via the following link: <https://www.highwycombesociety.org.uk/timeline/>

Some readers may remember Ann Simone's first Timeline which she produced on rolls of wallpaper, with clusters of headlines loosely grouped along three parallel lines: "HWS", "Local" and "National/International", further augmented by quirky illustrations and quotable quotes. The organisation emerged after a lot of shuffling of material and I remember Ann's delight when she discovered that the items she had collected over a period of months could be arranged in this way.

For the first nine of the next 13 years most of us (including Ann herself) did not have any convenient way to access her work. The Society paid for Chris Woodman and Graham Paterson to preserve it, and Ann, herself, took an active interest in getting the material onto large "panels", typed up to a common standard, laminated and accommodated in a portfolio carrying case (which Ann thought was an extravagance). Ann wrote detailed instructions to enable the Timeline to be assembled in a new venue, complete with its bag of quirky extra items. The large floppy disc of typed-up entries was sadly not quite as portable or useful as its creators had intended.

We owe the existence of the fifth decade of entries to Eileen Walters who was quite insistent that we should do something to update Ann's work for our Golden Anniversary in 2018. Thanks to Wycombe Abbey School we were able to loan enough board space to display the Timeline in "Big School".

One of the quirkier illustrations included on the timeline features members of the Pann Mill restoration team lifting the stones into place.



Clockwise from top left the people are thought to be: Owen Rush, Chris Wallis (the beard should be a lot bigger but he was never without a cap), Unknown (should be Peter Hazzard but he had much more hair) and Ian Barratt.

Lockdown restrictions in 2020 provided an exceptional opportunity of enough time in which to retype and format the material. My original intention was to enable a home-printed version of the timeline in a form which could fit on our portable exhibition boards. This has not yet been achieved, but a side-effect was the production of a single electronic document incorporating all the core text, and the means for Brian to create his online version.

The latest Lockdown in 2021 has enabled Brian to embellish his first version with further illustrations and links to related material, including poignantly the obituary of Ann Simone.

Jackie Kay

New Panels at Wycombe Museum

WYCOMBE MUSEUM has recently been making the most of a grant received from the Arts Council Cultural Recovery Fund. Essential work is being undertaken to make the galleries Covid-safe, but in addition, the funding has enabled Catherine Grigg to resume interpretation work which has been on hold ever since the major refurbishment in 2015. Good progress is being made thanks in part to some co-opted help from members of the High Wycombe Society who have done their best to review material on a wide range of subjects from tectonic forces which created the Chiltern hills to Wycombe Wanderers' achievements in the twenty-first century. We look forward to seeing the finished results when the Museum re-opens to the public.

Wycombe Environment – ‘WE’

‘WE’ IS AN experiment in sustainability – responding to the joint climate and wildlife emergencies. Can we, in High Wycombe, cut carbon, boost biodiversity and enhance the environment through our individual and collective actions?

The High Wycombe Community Board has established a sub-group for Climate Change and Environment, chaired by Cllr Sarfaraz Raja. As with the Community Board itself, the sub-group is a mix of Councillors and members of the public.

But what does a sub-group on this topic do? It was decided to see if we can actually ‘help make a difference’. So ‘WE’ is (are?!) the ‘implementation team’ for the sub-group. Hazlemere Parish has set up a working group to ‘get things done’ and WE is shamelessly borrowing the idea.

‘WE’ is very new. It was approved at the Community Board on 10th February, but the hope is that it will be a group of volunteers who are willing to put in some time each week to help people take practical steps to reduce their carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, to increase opportunities for wildlife, and make other improvements to the environment.

There are debates about what date the world needs to be carbon neutral by – but there is no longer any debate about the fact that we need to do so – and quicker is most definitely better – so let’s see what we can do locally. And with the decline in bees and other pollinators reminding us just how little space we’ve left for wildlife, let’s boost that while we are about it.

WE will be, of course, politically neutral, a broad church, welcoming everyone interested in our purpose of cutting carbon, boosting biodiversity and enhancing the environment. The plan is to build motivation for action through action – those two ‘actions’ in that sentence are deliberate. We will also help to explain why it is an emergency, because we need to get action on climate, biodiversity and the environment to be ‘normal’ across society.

We hope to help to find practical solutions to problems, to see if ‘we can’, rather than think that ‘we can’t’ and not try. We will work on the basis that persuasion is good, understanding is better, respect is essential, and take what people do as a gift, not expect or demand, not ‘ought’ or ‘should’ – and to be professional, not to come across as the ‘green volunteers’.

Just how we will work will emerge as we get going. We will be keeping the admin as light as we can, but still keeping some notes to report back to the sub-group and for purposes of public transparency. At first we will probably meet once a week – it is, after all, an emergency.

If you would like to join in the activity of ‘WE’, please drop me an email – I have volunteered to co-ordinate things to get things up and running. penelopetollitt@makingplacestogether.co.uk

Penelope Tollitt

Another Landmark – Soon to Disappear?

A PLANNING APPLICATION which sparked lively debate and divided opinion recently concerned the proposed demolition of a prominent landmark on the West Wycombe Road. If permitted to go ahead the former White Horse public house will disappear from the streetscape and be replaced by a relatively bland block of flats. Although records of a White Horse public house in this area go back to the mid-nineteenth century when the area was known as “Bird-in-hand”, the current building only dates



from the mid 1920’s. A clutch of nearby properties on the West Wycombe Road, slightly further out of town, are locally listed.

The corner site and steep gradient of the side road (Oakridge Road) presents challenges for the developers. Behind the property a very narrow street called Nutfield Lane, running parallel to the West Wycombe Road behind both the White Horse and Bird in Hand pubs and the site of an already demolished building between is thought to follow the route of the old main road to the west of town before Sir George Dashwood caused the current West Wycombe Road to be built.

Getting together on a Virtual SOFA

VOLUNTEER REGISTRANTS for the first ever pilot SOFA panel were promised two things: an opportunity to help the SOFA team with the next phase of their work; and the chance to have some fun! Unfortunately, in our rush to go to press with the advert in the last newsletter, we omitted to spell out what SOFA actually stood for. The acronym, coined when we were first raising funds to rescue the films and so familiar to those of us working on the project, left some readers baffled. Originally it was shorthand for “Save Our Film Archive” but its meaning has since morphed into “Share Our Film Archive” to reflect our wish to bring the contents of the films to a wider audience.



With a newly purchased Zoom licence, Jackie Kay hosted the session on behalf of the SOFA team. The silent film selected had 3 distinct parts: it began with preparations for the arrival of the Bertram Mills circus including the erection of a circus tent on the Rye; it moved on to the weighing-in of a Mayor beneath the Guildhall; and it concluded with a fundraising publicity stunt for the ‘Dove project’ featuring three ladies in hot pants, a large cuddly mascot and some Broomwade pneumatic machinery! Some participants were prompted to recollect past visits to the circus; Peter Cartwright confidently identified many participants in the mayoral procession including both the outgoing and incoming mayors and mayoresses; and the SOFA team relaxed as they noted that the names were consistent with a date label on the film can: 1973.



A lively conversation arose concerning the identity of a minor celebrity supporting the Dove project. Was it perhaps a young Joanna Lumley? or more likely, Veronica Carlson (nee Glazer), one-time student at High Wycombe College of Art and Technology who was talent-spotted, and starred in three Hammer Horror films? When the library re-opens, we hope to be able to find some Bucks Free Press coverage to confirm.

All agreed that the session was both enjoyable and useful, so there will be more as soon as time permits. The more information we can collect and record about these films, the more useful they will ultimately become as a historical resource.

SOFA team

P.S. If you would like to take part in future SOFA panels please make sure the Editor knows.

Knowing our Place

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL Archaeology Service has appealed for help in updating its ‘parish summaries’ on the Buckinghamshire Heritage Portal. The website, which was launched last summer, provides public access to vast amounts of local historical data and information. The ‘parish summaries’ in particular give potted overviews of significant archaeological sites, landscapes and buildings in each of the county’s 163 parishes, with illustrations and links to other detailed records and photographs. To get an idea of what is already there, take a look at:

<https://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/theme-list/parishes>

The ‘Parish of High Wycombe’ is a bit of a misnomer – it is a very wide area based on the civil parishes prior to 1974 and its summary is one of a number which have not been kept up to date. In response to the appeal, I have agreed to be a single point of contact for updating the High Wycombe parish material and will be undertaking necessary training in the near future. In the meantime, if any of you have suggestions for additions or changes, or would like to help in any way, please get in touch.

Jackie Kay

Notices

New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members:

Simon Stringer

Paul Lailey

Alex Down

Graham Page

Mrs Ann Davies

Obituaries

We regret to inform members of the death of:

Albert Ivermee

Meet the Mitfords

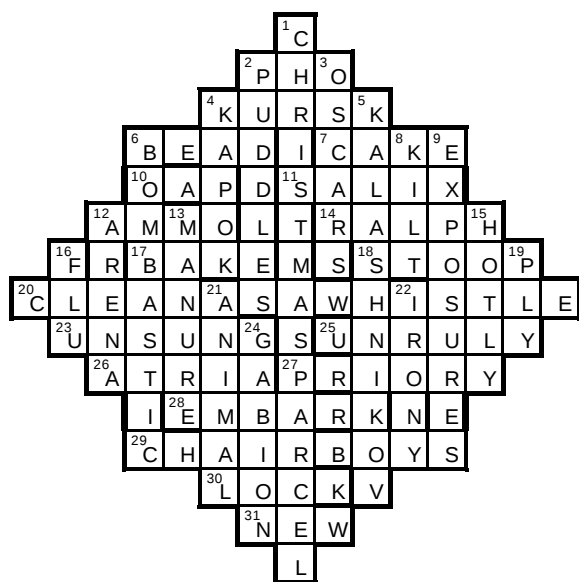
Friday 23rd April at 7.30 pm via Zoom

The Mitford sisters: Nancy, Pam, Diana, Unity, Decca and Debo, seen below in a family photo call at Swinbrook House in 1934, will be the subject of a talk by David Snoxell to the Society.

The focus of the talk will be on the period 1911 to 1949 and the family's association with Old Mill Cottage in High Wycombe.



Christmas Diamond by Clarsach (Solution)



Note: any non-members wishing to attend any of our Zoom meetings should contact the Treasurer via email: colinehingston@aol.com

Contributions Please.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue of the Newsletter. Please send material for the next edition addressed to me, Jackie Kay, as The Editor at 19 Hepplewhite Close, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 6BZ (Tel: 01494 534876), or preferably by email to:

newslettereditor@highwycombesociety.org.uk

All contributions to the next edition must be received by **20th May 2021**

You can also get in touch with the Editorial Team via the Society's Facebook page.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Put these dates in your diary **now!!!**

2021	
Friday 19 th March 7.30 pm via Zoom	"Marlow Railway and River 1831-1891" a talk by Adam Baxter
Friday 23 rd April 7.30 pm via Zoom	"The Mitford Sisters of High Wycombe, 1911- 1949" a talk by David Snoxell (see above)
Friday 28 th May 7.30 pm via Zoom	"Beacons of the Past" a talk by Dr Wendy Morrison of the Chilterns Conservation Board will provide an update on the Chilterns LiDAR results and work resulting from it. (See p1)
Friday 18 th June 7.30 pm via Zoom	The High Wycombe Society Annual General Meeting (see pp2-3). Details will be sent out to members in advance of the meeting.