

THE HIGH WYCOMBE SOCIETY

newsletter

NUMBER 202

SPRING 2022



Talk of the Town

IF YOU USE the Chilterns Shopping Centre as a short cut, then be on the alert for its newest occupant! Jan Card sent me this photo, as she was startled to encounter a full-size Dalek on her travels, though she survived to tell the tale! It now stands on guard duty just inside the Model Shop "Collectables R Us Ltd" in the Chilterns Shopping Centre but with plans to move to Eden later in the year.

Many Society members saw one another socially in January but only over Zoom (see p7); many more a couple of weeks later accepted an invitation from Hedgerley Historical Society to Zoom in to hear Julian Hunt deliver a talk somewhat provocatively entitled: "High Wycombe – Buckinghamshire's Premier Town". A thoroughly enjoyable evening which chimed with our Society's *raison d'être*. Julian has also contributed an article on a narrower subject to this edition of our Newsletter (see pp6-7).

Much effort is currently being directed towards the Society's forthcoming art exhibition which we hope all readers will support (see p9 and below), but close on its heels we also have the first of three Open Days at Pann Mill to look forward to, hopefully a sign of more normal times to come. Will Pann Mill feature on the proposed new Wycombe monopoly board? I wonder. (See p5)

Our Treasurer has recently simplified our banking arrangements and is so far pleased with the results (but see pp4-5 for the full story). And, of course, no Spring Newsletter would be complete without at least a mention of a forthcoming AGM. The date is set for 10th June. Our Hon Secretary, Tony Hatton, will be writing to all members between now and then to confirm details, but he has asked me to highlight his personal wish to hand over his reins to another (he suggests younger) pair of hands. Would any of our newer members like to serve as a Trustee or Officer?

In the meantime, let's make our art exhibition "The Talk of the Town"!

Jackie Kay

THE High Wycombe Society Event this spring

Saturday 16th – Thursday 28th April

Open Hours: 10am-4pm daily

Thursdays: 10am-6pm

See p9 for details

*A Brush with
Wycombe's Past*

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

Registered Charity No. 257897

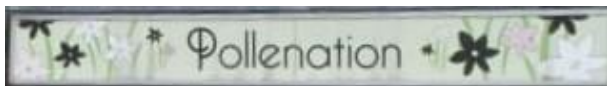
Honorary Secretary: Tony Hatton, 41 Bassetsbury Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 1QZ. Tel: (01494) 445071

Planning Matters

WHILE PLANNING is by its very nature concerned with taking care of the future, much of Planning Group's attention of late has been directed to the present condition of the town, reacting to changing appearances and new opportunities for action in the town centre. Opportunities for the Group to contribute via the Community Board are welcome. Changes to building frontages in Conservation Areas are generally frowned upon, but there is sometimes a balance to be sought between preserving a historic street scene and supporting economic enterprise which has prompted some lively debate. Meanwhile the saga of the "reserve sites" continues, the latest proposals for the Gomm Valley falling far short of previous expectations.

Town centre building frontages In the Winter 2021 edition of the Newsletter we drew attention to changes at **1 High Street**. This corner building, right next to the 14th century Wheatsheaf building (now fully restored and due to open imminently as a neighbourhood cocktail bar and events venue) used to be an attractive shade of dark maroon, but at the end of last year the young occupiers, reportedly ignorant of the requirements for maintaining listed buildings, painted it a dazzling shade of white. This breached planning rules and a complaint has now been lodged with Buckinghamshire Council. This case in particular demonstrates the need for better publicity about the rules already in place to protect the appearance of our historic town centre – without waiting for the Supplementary Planning Guidance which the Council have undertaken to produce.

In contrast **1 Church Street**, home to TSB, is not a listed building, even though it was built as a replica of the historic Chequers which was sadly lost in the 1970s. It is, however, still in the Conservation Area, and due regard must be paid to its surroundings. The previous attractive dark bevelled wood has recently been covered with TSB's one-size-fits-all corporate colour. The Group has submitted an enforcement complaint about this too, although it is possible that no formal breach has occurred in this case. However, it underlines the need for all town centre businesses to be sensitive to the issues.



At 4 Cornmarket, the established and tastefully appointed florist, Pollenation has sadly closed. There has been an application to convert the premises to a Teddy Bear Bubble Tea shop*.



The Planning Group has not been united on this case. Any new business opening in the town centre is welcome; vacant units are unsightly, can attract unwelcome activity, and do not enhance the historic core of the town. Moreover, this is

just the kind of successful established business that we need, and a case can be made that the branding, while lively, is neat and tidy and part of the enterprise. However, the proposed colour, a shocking pink, is not appropriate for a handsome Grade II listed building in the Conservation Area, very close to our fine Guildhall, and an objection has been submitted. The Group would be pleased to hear views from readers on the balance to be struck between protecting our historic street scene and giving rein to modern dynamic enterprise – you can email us at planning@highwycombesociety.org.uk.

The Wheatsheaf The hoarding came down in early February to reveal a beautifully refurbished building which, as we know, dates back to 1399. Our congratulations to the Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings Trust who have masterminded the work of renovating this very special building, and thanks are also due to the Architectural Heritage Fund and Buckinghamshire Council. It is soon set to open as a cocktail bar with food provided by a carousel of different chefs, which should be interesting and innovative. Encouragingly, one of the three brothers who are set to open the business is Lewis O'Shea, who apparently helped set up Lata Lata. The Planning Group are looking forward to their first meeting on the premises, and have already ordered their first Mai Tai and Negroni cocktails.

High Wycombe Community Board Planning Group members Heather Morley and Chris Woodman have been asked to join the High Wycombe Community Board Covid Recovery and Regeneration Action Group. This mouthful of words basically means that they are getting stuck in to come up with ways in which our town can recover from the Covid hit. Over the last year, this Action Group has successfully brought people together to tackle Food Inequality and Financial Insecurity, which affect many people in the town, and these strands are now up and running. Chris and Heather are therefore mainly involved with Town Regeneration and will be looking at creating more positive messages about the town's heritage, people, assets and events. Whilst the council is addressing major strategic regeneration investments, and a working group including HWBIDCo, local businesses and the police is working to tackle anti-social behaviour,

there is an opportunity to tackle smaller issues such as graffiti, litter, chewing gum, non-functioning street lighting and so on. Members of the Society can help by being extra eyes and ears - we can all do our bit to make the town a better place. Heather is willing to receive emails to report issues in the town centre on those lines, ideally with a photo to show the problem. So when you are out and about, please make a note and email her on morleyfamily1039@aol.com. She asks respectfully that you don't deluge her or expect that issues will be sorted out immediately, but the Community Board team will do their best!



Shutter alert! 20-22 White Hart Street White Hart Street is handsome in parts but has sadly been afflicted with the most unsympathetic alterations. At this address shutters have appeared - both external over the right door facing the building and an internal shutter covering the windows. Blue and nearly solid in appearance they create a hostile atmosphere and are certainly unacceptable in planning terms. Shutters will always be controversial. They will only be in use when the premises are closed, so the greatest impact on the street scene will typically be on summer evenings or at the weekend. Shops such as this, with attractive costly items (mobile phones etc) on display, certainly need security out-of-hours. Nevertheless, this is a Grade II Listed building in the Conservation Area. The Planning Group has an enforcement complaint in hand.

Unfortunately there are some awkward precedents. At Computer Gallery just along the



street, a building once proudly named "Buckinghamshire House" and fondly recognised by many because of its mouldings of pigs above pilasters incorporating ornamental rams' heads, there are green shutters which are arguably worse as the central grid over the window area in this case is external. Perhaps we should encourage security measures which are less obtrusive? Your views would be welcome.

Gomm Valley In the Summer 2021 Newsletter we reported the Group's shock at learning that Aviva, who owned this, arguably the most beautiful of the reserve housing sites released in 2014 for development, had decided to dump their consultants Human Nature and sell the site to mass housebuilder Taylor Wimpey. Since then, all our fears at that time are coming true. Taylor Wimpey's new consultants, DevComms, have consulted well, meeting the Group by Zoom on 7th December where it was clear that they had read and understood the Council's Planning Brief for the site, and then holding an informative public exhibition at Micklefield on 22nd January. But, as our friends in the Penn & Tylers Green Residents Association pointed out in a devastating critique, Taylor Wimpey propose 1,000 dwellings compared to the 400 provided for in the approved Local Plan, greatly exceeding the developable areas on the Local Plan map, without any of the impressive green mitigating factors proposed by Human Nature. The only community facility offered is a primary school. From what can be seen at this stage, despite the plans showing three "defined character areas", the designs of the dwellings will be boring and repetitive like the worst that we have seen from Taylor Wimpey in the past - "a featureless housing development tacked on to the outskirts of High Wycombe". The spine road will be wide enough to permit rat-running, enabling rush hour traffic to avoid most of Cock Lane, and increase the total traffic through Tylers Green. The only good thing to be said is that the housing will be concentrated on the west side of the valley, leaving the eastern slope, including the Site of Special Scientific Interest, mostly intact. When the full planning application comes forward, to be determined by the Major Projects Planning Committee in Aylesbury, the Group is likely to strongly oppose it.

Planning Group

***Editor's P.S.** - If the word "tapioca" only conjures up distant memories of milk puddings in school dinners, then the modern trend for Bubble Tea may not immediately appeal. I am told the drink originated in Taiwan and in its basic form is typically a combination of tea with chewy tapioca balls, but there are many modern variations to suit varied tastes.

The Definite Article

HOPEFULLY ALL MEMBERS will be aware by now that we changed the Society's banking arrangements last year. If you haven't already done so there is still time to amend your standing order to pay your 2022/3 subscription on time in April (see end of article for details). In the meantime, I thought it would be interesting to relate the full story of what happened. I am aware that, as someone who finds charity accounting exciting, I might have a different view from everyone else on what qualifies as interesting, but that won't stop me unloading my experiences on to you, dear reader!

It all began in August 2021 when HSBC sent a standard email to all customers warning that Community Accounts (we had 3 of these) were being discontinued and converted to "Charitable Accounts". Charitable by name maybe but not by nature, these new accounts would involve charges of £5 per month, 40p per cheque paid in or out and 0.4% of cash paid in. The changes would come into effect on November 1st.

After decades of corporate financial experience, I confess I have an inherent hatred of bank charges of any sort, and I knew there were alternative banks available which wouldn't charge anything for charities. So, with the agreement of my fellow trustees, I made an appointment with Metro Bank for 27th September. They couldn't see us any earlier because of the large number of charities switching to them from HSBC! We took advantage of the Pann Mill Open Day on September 12th to convene a short Trustees' meeting to formally approve the change of bank.

Metro Bank were a breath of fresh air after efforts to contact HSBC to discuss the situation had been entirely unsuccessful. It took most of a day to complete all the formalities of ID for signatories etc., but that is the same at every financial institution these days with measures intended to protect customers against fraudulent activity. Understandably, viewing our Charity Commission registration on the internet, Metro Bank set up the account with our correct name – "The High Wycombe Society". They then explained that they could organise a simple switch from HSBC so that the balance plus standing orders/direct debits in or out would be automatically transferred. This of course would only work with one account, so I amalgamated the HSBC accounts into one.

A few days later, with the new account up and running, armed with the HSBC cheque book, I turned up at Metro Bank to arrange the "simple switch". But there was a problem: the HSBC account was in the name "High Wycombe Society". To proceed with the plan, the account names needed to match exactly. The lack of a definite article definitely meant that the switch could not take place. The new account was operational. All that was needed was for it to have some funds put into it. So I promptly paid a few hundred pounds - the proceeds of the Pann Mill Open Day - into the new account. This turned out to be a highly intelligent move.

Although I could transfer money from HSBC to

Metro Bank the total sum was about £28,000 and I could not transfer more than £1,000 on-line in a single transaction. So it was back to HSBC on the phone. The Charity Account enquiry service could only advise me on the new charges and other conditions. They could not discuss closing accounts or transferring funds. They transferred me to the number I had tried before which no-one answered. I tried the number several times. The record hold time without response was 1 hour 25 minutes. I tried visiting the branch in the Cornmarket, but they no longer had any cashier positions and the one person on reception said they couldn't help because they were now just a "digital retail branch" without any business advisors. So the service that they were going to charge for hardly existed any more. I tried the HSBC Charity phone number again and explained that the number they had transferred me to is never answered. They advised me to visit my branch!

The next option was to go back to the original HSBC email which contained a website reference from which to obtain an account closure form. The form when downloaded and completed, including details of the Metro Bank account where the money was to be transferred, then needed to be signed by two account signatories, and sent to HSBC Leicester; this was duly done on October 13th. Its processing would take about 3 weeks according to details on the HSBC website. On 29th November HSBC moved the money out of our account and closed it. So far so good!

A couple of days later I checked the Metro Bank account – there was no payment in. I received a copy of the transfer advice on December 2nd but the Beneficiary Bank Code and Bank Branch were both blank. I checked with Metro Bank again on December 2nd and 6th and still no change. I visited Metro Bank on December 7th. Again, they were very helpful when I showed them the advice. There was nothing they could do as the money could only be traced from the payer's end, but they were pretty sure with the lack of information on the advice that Metro Bank head office would have sent the money straight back to HSBC. The fact that we had a few hundred pounds in the Metro Bank account meant I could pay the bills that were then arising (including the one for printing the Newsletter!)

What now? The Banking Ombudsman started to loom in the back of my mind, but while searching

the internet for options I found an HSBC Complaints procedure (not something that is easily accessible from the main HSBC website). I logged a complaint and received a response that it would be looked at within 7 days. Not happy with the prospect of waiting another week, I noticed an email address that I also tried (never had an email address for HSBC before). The following day an acknowledgement email arrived with a new phone number. I tried phoning that and it was answered very quickly by a very nice man who was able to confirm the money had come back from Metro Bank and was currently in a holding account. He would chase up the payment team in India but warned me that they were very busy (- not surprisingly, I thought). On December 13th, he came back by email with a promise of £150 compensation and stating he had that day instructed that the funds be sent to the correct account. On December 17th, although reassuringly the £150 had arrived a couple of days earlier, there was still no £28K! Another call to Complaints was answered by a different very nice man who said he would re-start the investigation. The money came through finally late that afternoon.

I recognise that with interest rates as low as they have been for some years now, banks can no longer make the bulk of their income from interest and need to charge fees for various services. Also, the fines dished out by various authorities from time to time have to be paid. It's

difficult to find a bank that hasn't been fined for something in the past few years. HSBC was issued a bill for £64m in December 2021 for failings in anti-money laundering processes. And Metro Bank had to pay £5.4m for failing to report its capital position correctly between 2016 and 2019 – they have since corrected their processes and risk weightings. In the long run there may be no way for any of us to avoid bank charges. But in the short-term, on behalf of the Society, the Trustees will continue to take appropriate steps to avoid them while we can.

Colin Hingston

The Society's new bank details are:

The High Wycombe Society
Sort code: 23-05-80
Account No. 42783986

Membership subscriptions are due on 6th April and members are encouraged to set up standing orders with their banks. Be sure to include the "The" if asked for the new account name!

Annual subscriptions remain set at: £8 for individuals; £12 for families; £4 for retired pensioners.

Now High Wycombe is the map

IT ALL STARTED in 1904 when Lizzie Maggie patented a board game called The Landlord's Game. Various versions were developed over the years until 1932 when one Charles Darrow started to market a version that he called Monopoly. He obtained a patent for his design, despite Maggie still holding the patent for her original design, but sold this and the copyright to Parker Brothers who also bought Maggie's patent.

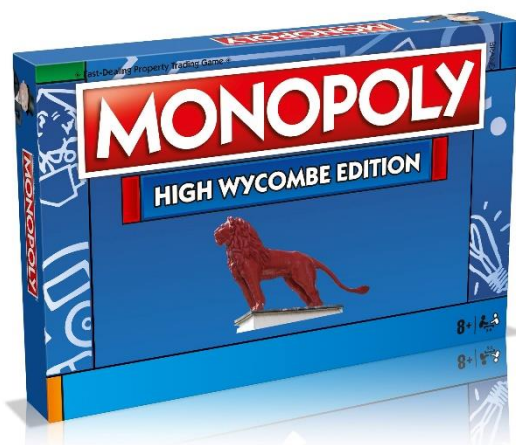
Parker Brothers held the rights to a large number of popular board games and in 1936 licensed John Waddington Ltd to manufacture and distribute Monopoly in the UK. Parker Brothers were taken over by Hasbro in 1991 and started to issue some international versions of the game. Then in 1998 Winning Moves procured a

Monopoly license from Hasbro and started to create new UK city and regional editions.

And so to 2022 when High Wycombe will join the likes of Blackpool, East Grinstead and Manchester in having its own Monopoly board featuring local streets and landmarks. Winning Moves staged a launch event in the High Street on the 14th February which was well reported in the Bucks Free Press. The company is now considering the suggestions for the names on the squares made via the High Wycombe Monopoly Facebook page. This is also the place to follow development of the game. The Community Chest squares will feature local charities while other suggestions for featured sites include All Saints, the Rye, Pann Mill and possibly the Hell Fire Caves. There are a lot of places that the manufacturers could use.

Malcolm Connell

The finished game should be released around October, in time for Christmas and may look a bit like Malcolm's mock-up (left).



A Storey Too Tall for 36 High Street

DURING THE RECENT lockdowns, I tended to buy books which I would normally have consulted in public libraries. One such purchase, via Abebooks, was a copy of Ivan Sparkes's *High Wycombe in Old Picture Postcards*, published in 1983. Mr Sparkes was the top man at High Wycombe Library and Curator of the Wycombe Chair and Local History Museum. He therefore had access to the rich collections of both institutions. My attention was drawn to his illustration no. 27, showing a glamorous four-storey shop called 'Navarino House' which Mr Sparkes suggested was located at 36 High Street, the site now occupied by W.H. Smith & Sons.

Checking up, I found that the battle of Navarino took place on 20th October 1827, when a combined fleet of British, French and Russian vessels destroyed the Turkish fleet at anchor in Navarino Bay, in Greece. Many business premises opened at this time were called 'Navarino House.' I subsequently purchased Mr. Sparkes's *High Wycombe, a Pictorial History*, published in 1990, which has a clearer version of the same print (illustration 146). Beneath the words 'Navarino House' is the name of the then proprietors: 'Ridgway & Company, Lace Manufacturers.' The current editor of this Newsletter points out that one of her predecessors included the same illustration of the four-storey shop called 'Navarino House' in the issue of Winter 1997/98 and again stated that the building stood on the site of the present-day W.H. Smith & Sons. This puzzled me as I was not aware that any of the prosperous houses and shops in the High Street were four storeys high. Recent work on the history of the High Street has shown that Mr Sparkes and the former Newsletter editor were deceived, and that the 'Navarino House' depicted was in fact a lace manufacturer's shop in Market Street, Manchester.

Having a long-standing interest in the Buckinghamshire lace industry, I searched contemporary trade directories, but found no trace of a lace buyer named Ridgway. I had better luck entering the term 'Ridgway' in the search facility of the *London Gazette*. I found in the issue of 20th March 1832 the bankruptcy of George and John Ridgway of Manchester, lacemen. Using the term 'Navarino House' in *British Newspaper Archive*, I came across advertisements for Charles Johnson & Co., lace



manufacturers 'from High Wycombe', who opened 'Navarino House' at 5 Market Street, Manchester in May 1828. Market Street was perhaps Manchester's most elegant shopping street, with long terraces of four-storey shops. Contemporary prints show a terrace of shops which perfectly matches Mr. Sparkes's illustration. Returning to the Buckinghamshire trade directories of the period, I found no trace of Charles Johnson. I concluded that even if Johnson or the Ridgways sourced some of their goods from High Wycombe, neither of them stayed in business very long.



Market Street Manchester with four-storey shops
F. J. Havell, after a picture by Harwood, Public domain,
via Wikimedia Commons

The premises in the High Street which Mr Sparkes erroneously took to be 'Navarino House' proved to be older than 1827. New research suggests that they were built by an opulent grocer named William Baly, who was a proprietor of the bar-iron warehouse at the corner of White Hart Street and Queen's Square. Baly was also a partner in the Wycombe and Buckinghamshire Bank, along with Samuel Manning, Isaac King and John Rotton. In the *Oxford Journal* of 6th April 1793, it was announced that the bank's premises were moving to the house of Mr William Baly,

opposite the Red Lion, High Street. In the same issue, William Baly advertised that he was “removing on Monday next from his shop in the Market Place to a new building opposite the Red Lion Inn, in the High Street, where he will continue to supply them with every article in the grocery business, wholesale and retail, on the lowest London terms.”



*William Baly's new premises opposite the Red Lion
SWOP ref BFP:04502 Courtesy of the Bucks Free Press*

William Baly died on 20th October 1830 aged 75. His premises were taken by Daniel Hearn and

Joseph Veary, lace dealers and grocers, who bought the freehold of the property in 1843. Manufacturers like Hearn and Veary, who were also grocers, often paid their workers in over-priced goods rather than in cash, a sharp practice supposedly outlawed by the Truck Act of 1831. Daniel Hearn and Joseph Veary both died in 1851, leaving their business to be continued by Hearn's assistant, Thomas Gilbert, lace merchant, grocer and draper. In evidence to the Commissioners on the Employment of Children in 1862, Gilbert claimed to employ 3000 lacemakers in southern Buckinghamshire and the adjoining part of Oxfordshire. He explained that, “They are not absolutely employed by me as workpeople, but I sell them the materials, patterns and silk or thread, and there is a mutual understanding, though no legal obligation, that I should take all the lace for which I have sold patterns.”

The grocery premises, later numbered 36 High Street, were subsequently occupied by Benjamin Robert Wright, another grocer. In the early 1900s, the shop was taken by Rolls Brothers, house furnishers. In the 1920s, 36 High Street was bought by W.H. Smith & Sons, who rebuilt the shop in the 1960s.

Julian Hunt

Starting the Year on the sofa

JUST A YEAR on from the Society's first tentative experiments using Zoom, a select group of members and supporters tuned in to the social event on Friday 7th January as advertised in the Winter Newsletter; they were to be rewarded by a pleasant relaxing evening with conversation flowing around a wide range of subjects.

Prompted by the host, we heard first from Willie Reid about plans for the Society's art exhibition in April to be called “A Brush with Wycombe's Past”, and we discussed possible ways to engage young people. We then watched a short film from the SOFA collection featuring Richard Crossman's visit to the town in 1965 and demolition work making way for the Inner Ring Road. Marian Miller gave some insights into the work in progress at the former Wheatsheaf Inn and current efforts on the Local List project.

Discussion about the former Wheatsheaf prompted one participant to share her knowledge of a feature of the building: dubbed “Annie's room”, a storage area on the first floor which belonged to a neighbouring property but could only be accessed via the outside of the building, by climbing over a section of roof, past a skylight and down a ladder.

The SOFA film triggered some nostalgic reflections, several participants sharing their experiences of commuting to work. One who used to take the only morning train to Paddington from Wycombe, starting in 1970, was tickled when I told him that, only three

years earlier when I used it to travel to my first job, it was drawn by a steam engine.

Mike Blackwell, whose family history research has confirmed that one of his ancestors founded Blackwell's bookshop in Oxford, said that he regularly used Saunderton station. He observed that it used to be crowded but is now virtually deserted. The fact that a train stops at all, he explained, was due to the nearby MoD establishment, which imposed a requirement for at least one train an hour to stop. It was thought that the number of commuters from Wycombe station had also declined.

Uncertainty about the Covid outlook made it difficult to talk about future events - the mood was one of “wait and see”. While many members may yearn for a return to “real” meetings where mingling can take place over refreshments, Zoom also offers other opportunities, not least, for those of us who have moved away from our home town, the opportunity to join in conversation from the comfort of our own living rooms wherever we might be.

Clifton Hughes

Angela Rees

THE NEWS THAT Angela Rees has died will be greeted with sadness by those that knew her. Angela was one of those wonderful behind-the-scenes helpers for the High Wycombe Society whose hard work was not known to all members. She enthusiastically ran the Programme and Membership Group for a number of years, arranging talks and planning outings. Two memorable events were the visit to Sir William McAlpine's private railway at Fawley and a talk on Isambard Kingdom Brunel to commemorate his birth. People came from far and wide until it was standing room only in the Guildhall. Angela was outgoing and threw herself happily into all Society activities. She was also an enthusiastic and long-serving volunteer at Wycombe Museum. She was looking forward to exploring Folkestone when she moved. Our condolences go to her daughters Kate and Liz.

Mary Woodman

From our Traffic Correspondent

WHEN DID YOU last read the Highway Code? The chances are it has changed a bit since you did. Eight significant changes came into effect on 29th January 2022, their intention to improve the safety of vulnerable road users, that is primarily people walking, cycling and riding horses.

Many (but not all) of the rules in The Highway Code are legal requirements. If you disobey these rules you are committing a criminal offence. You may be fined, given penalty points on your licence or be disqualified from driving. In the most serious cases you may be sent to prison. Such rules are identified by the use of the words 'MUST/MUST NOT'.

Failure to comply with other rules within The Highway Code will not result in a prosecution, BUT The Highway Code can still be used in evidence in any court proceedings under the Traffic Acts to establish liability. This includes rules which use advisory wording such as "should/should not" or "do/do not".

Asked to predict the likely outcome of the recent changes I have to say that I foresee an increase in relatively low speed rear end collisions at junctions when drivers of vehicles turning in to and out of junctions could misjudge the intentions of a pedestrian who may or may not be going to cross the road and suddenly decide to take action i.e. stop for a pedestrian who is safely on the pavement waiting to cross. Drivers of vehicles behind them may be momentarily looking

elsewhere e.g. to the right to judge if they can also exit from a junction. They could easily be taken by surprise when the driver of a vehicle in front judges they are required to stop but they think the situation is safe to continue.

There is also a risk of some vulnerable road users misinterpreting their priority (arrogantly perhaps in some cases) and putting themselves in danger unnecessarily. It is a requirement that vulnerable road users should be aware of the dangers and judge and act accordingly in the situation they find themselves in.

Many of the new sections of the Highway Code only spell out how you should be driving anyway e.g. giving way to pedestrians in the road at junctions or when crossing the road on pedestrian crossings because, even under the former Highway code, you were not allowed to run them over! I feel that the dangers will come from misinterpretation of the rules and guidance.

Responsible road users will always do their best to drive and ride responsibly. Irresponsible road users will still drive and ride irresponsibly.

Mick Lewis

Calling Like-Minded people to Pick Litter

SEVERAL CIVIC-MINDED individuals and local groups are already responding to national calls for a "Great British Spring Clean" from 25th March to 10th April.

Booker Common & Woods Protection Society didn't wait for that call – their "Spring Litter Blitz" was already set to take place on 20th March. By the time you are reading this it might already have happened.

HWBidCo's programme also includes a Spring Clean event in the High Street on 26th March. This is run by Chiltern Rangers and would-be participants need first to register via the "MyWycombe" webpage as there are limited

places available. This newsletter, being only quarterly, is not the best means of sharing news of such opportunities as they arise.

Society member Dave Scott wonders if there are other High Wycombe Society members who would like to respond to similar calls in future and might be interested in joining with him in a collective High Wycombe Society litter effort.

Dave can be contacted via email on davescott321@btinternet.com.

The Art of Mounting an Art Exhibition

IT IS RIGHT for the people of High Wycombe to have an opportunity to celebrate the two wonderful paintings of 'The High Street in High Wycombe in 1772' by William Hannan, which are 250 years old this year. Their reproductions will be star attractions at the High Wycombe Society's art exhibition in the Guildhall from 16th to 28th April 2022. Thanks to Dan Wilson at Wycombe Arts Centre, we have a very striking poster featuring one of Hannan's works which should already be in wide circulation by the time you are reading this. Can you help spread the word? As reported in the Winter edition, the Society has also accepted Wycombe Museum's offer to "adopt" the Hannan print they have on display. Our exhibition at the Guildhall will provide an opportunity to study the picture which Hannan originally produced as a watercolour, together with a first opportunity to see a newly produced high-quality photographic reproduction of the rediscovered Hannan oil painting that first featured in this Newsletter back in the Summer 2020 edition.

We hope that as many readers as possible will come to see for themselves the many named characters in these paintings; members of the gentry, soldiers, shopkeepers, publicans, servants, postboys, ministers, and coachmen are all portrayed along with horses, dogs, a cat and a goat. Find out why Mr Henry House appeared in the painting twice and puzzle over the whereabouts of Mr Allnutt's shop! The Red Lion also featured in the watercolour, one of the country's great coaching inns known for its civility, cleanliness and comfort. In its heyday it had stabling for 42 horses. But there are also another eight inns in the scene.

The photographic copy of Hannan's stunning oil painting has been made for the High Wycombe Society. It depicts in great detail a busy street scene with a stagecoach prominent in the foreground. For example, in third class, along with the cases, sits a woman smoking a clay pipe whilst a Scotsman with a Glengarry bonnet surveys the scene. A shop sign in the Cornmarket boasts that Mr Heading, the grocer, can compete with London on prices! [Mr Heading's nephews later leased this property to Mr Baly for his business, which is mentioned in Julian Hunt's article on p6-7]. As for Mr Cockburn "the butcher", you can see the whopping great boar that he has allegedly killed. Many of the characters are depicted in both paintings, which also include a wealth of architectural detail.

Since the Winter Newsletter was published, Tony Mealing has completed his architectural paintings of both sides of the High Street which, being over nine foot long, have posed a major challenge to those designing the exhibition layout; and we have also discovered some unknown mid-twentieth century artworks including architectural drawings by an early member of the High Wycombe Society.

Included in the Editor's personal list of top reasons to visit the exhibition, though, is an opportunity to see a copy of the Gough map. The online version of this featured in the Autumn 2020 Newsletter but it deserves to be better-known.

Insights into our town's topography can also be gained by looking at maps created by those at the Royal Military College to support their military operations.

The High Wycombe Society supported by Wycombe Arts Centre, Wycombe Museum and HWBIDCo proudly present

A Brush with Wycombe's Past

GRAND EXHIBITION

In celebration of 250 years of William Hannan's paintings of 'The High Street in High Wycombe in 1772' and of the town and its artists. Also featuring historic maps of the area.

Saturday 16th – Thursday 28th April 2022
The Guildhall, Wycombe High Street
 10am – 4pm daily, Thursdays 10am – 6pm
FREE ENTRY

Featuring paintings, prints and reproductions by William Hannan, John Mortimer, J M W Turner, E J Niemann, Francis Colmer, Featherstone Robson, Maj-Gen John Gaspard le Marchant, Lorna Cassidy, Tony Mealing, Jan Gaska, Daniel Wilson & more.
 Copies of maps include 'The Gough Map' (c1360) and a military training map from the Royal Military College in High Wycombe 1799-1813.
 Free 45 min High Street guided historical walks every Sunday & Monday at noon.
 The High Wycombe Society acknowledges the grant awarded by High Wycombe Town Committee to support this art exhibition. The High Wycombe Society Registered Charity: 257897

More info at highwycombesociety.org.uk

Logos for The High Wycombe Society, Wycombe Arts Centre, Wycombe Museum, and High Wycombe are displayed at the bottom.

The logistics of mounting this exhibition have not been without their challenges. With very few of us actively involved, there have been problems we did not foresee when we embarked on the venture. We are grateful for the support we are receiving from Wycombe Arts Centre, Wycombe Museum and HWBIDCo. The High Wycombe Society also acknowledges a grant awarded by the High Wycombe Town Committee to support the art exhibition.

Above all we hope that our exhibition will enthuse people in and around High Wycombe and perhaps even from further afield. For many, it will also be a rare opportunity to appreciate the features of the Guildhall itself.

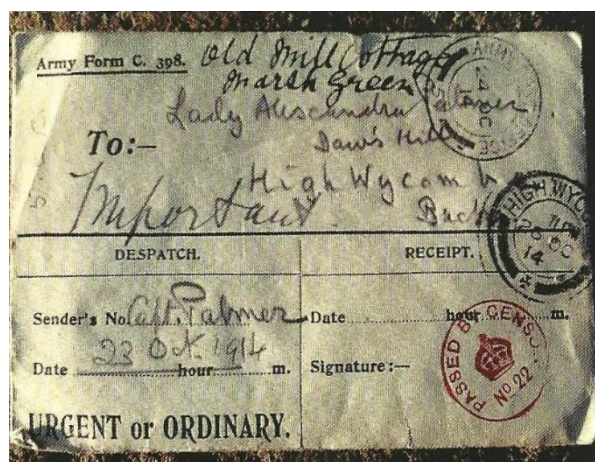
Willie Reid

From Flanders to Wycombe in 1914

IN 2003 while High Commissioner to Mauritius, I received a visit in Port Louis from a director at the Commonwealth Graves Commission (CWGC). I told him *en passant* that I was looking for my great uncle – my grandmother's brother - Ernest Hunt, who had enlisted in 1914 and was killed in Flanders just before the 1918 Armistice. A subsequent lead from the CWGC took me to a cemetery on the outskirts of Rouen – but it turned out to be the wrong Hunt. More recently I found him. He was John Ernest Hunt, a private in the Machine Gun Corps, born 1890 at Old Trafford. His grandfather Thomas Hunt was an English first-class cricket player whose career began with the Sheffield Club (later Yorkshire CCC), moved to the Manchester Club (later Lancashire CCC) and included playing for the United All-England Eleven from 1852. Legend has it that Ernest's father was born in the pavilion during a match. Ernest died on 8th October 1918 at Havrincourt during the fighting to cross the Hindenburg Line and was buried at Grand Ravine British cemetery, near Cambrai.

My discovery of Ernest Hunt's grave coincided with my reading *Letters from the Front, Captain Palmer's eyewitness account of the retreat from Mons in 1914*. These letters, written during the 1st battle of Ypres, were compiled and published in a book a hundred years later by his grandson Charlie Llewellyn Palmer. Captain Palmer's wife, Lady Alexandra (née Wynn-Carington) and daughter of the Marquess of Lincolnshire, was said to have lived at Old Mill Cottage during WW1 with her two sons, born in 1915 and 1917. This was at first puzzling as I knew that the mother of the Mitford sisters, Sydney Mitford, had rented the cottage from the Marquess from 1911 until 1925 when she bought it, along with Marsh Green Mill. Members of the Mitford family had lived there intermittently, using it as a country retreat until it was sold in 1949. But it transpires that the Mitfords were not in residence from mid-1915 until 1919.

There are twenty letters between 27th August and 7th December 1914. An envelope, addressed to Lady Alexandra Palmer at Daws Hill (Lodge) where the Marquess and family lived at the time, is displayed on the back cover. It is dated 23rd October 1914; it was received by the Army Post Office in Regent's Park the next day and by High Wycombe post office on 25th October where it was re-addressed to Old Mill Cottage, Marsh Green. The letter took only two days from Flanders to High Wycombe – post was quicker a century ago during a world war!



The letters make horrendous reading, recounting the horrors of trench warfare and the inhumanity of both sides. They must have had a dreadful impact on Alexandra and in turn on her two small children.

In one of the letters, dated 12th November 1914, Palmer commiserated over the loss of 24-year-old Lieutenant Nigel Legge-Bourke who had died on 30th October 1914. He was the husband of Lady Victoria, one of Alexandra's younger sisters and also cousin of the husband of another, Lady Ruperta. His body was not found but there is a plaque to him in St James Church, Fulmer (Slough) and he is remembered on the Menin Gate in Ypres. He had been married for less than two years and would never know his infant son.

On a less serious note, on 22nd November 1914, using his nickname "Pedlar" from his Harrow schooldays, Palmer informs his wife that he is expecting to be given 96 hours leave in England. "Is there room for me in your cottage? Where can I go?" he asks. They decide to meet at the Ritz in London where they "could spend the day with the children and mother and Dad could come and see one". Pedlar was badly wounded at the Somme in 1916 and returned to England.

I have not discovered why Alexandra came to live in the cottage, a short walk from Daws Hill Lodge, which was a substantial mansion, remodelled in 1901 by Earl Carrington after he sold Wycombe Abbey to the girls' school. As well as Victoria and Ruperta, Alexandra had two other married sisters (Marjorie and Judith) and a brother, Viscount Wendover, known as Bob, who joined the Royal Horseguards.

Bob died aged 20 in the base hospital of Boulogne from wounds suffered in a charge at the second battle of Ypres, where on 13th May he went into battle for the first and last time. Lord Lincolnshire was informed that his only son had been injured. At first it was thought that he would recover. But his condition worsened. In an attempt to save his life his shattered arm was amputated for fear of gangrene. His parents arrived a few hours before he died on 19th May 1915.

They accompanied his body to their London home by train and later buried him in the Carington family vault at St Mary's Moulsoe. There is a plaque to his memory in All Saints Church, High Wycombe proclaiming, *all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side*. In all, nine members of the Carington family died in WW1. Wendover's untimely death meant that later, on the death of his father, the marquessate became extinct but the Carrington title passed to the Marquess' brother and in turn to his great nephew Peter.

David Mitford, husband of Sydney, was home from Ypres on sick leave at Old Mill Cottage when he received the news that his elder brother Clement, a major in the 10th Royal Hussars, had been killed, aged 38 on 13th May 1915. Thus, David became the heir to his father's estates and title Baron Redesdale. Clement was buried at Vlamertinghe military cemetery near Ypres - a wrought iron memorial gate is dedicated to him there. Shortly afterwards the Mitford family moved to Malcolm House on Lord Redesdale's Batsford estate and sub-let Old Mill Cottage until they returned there in 1919 following the sale of Batsford.

Lord and Lady Desborough (Grenfell) of Taplow Court nearby, acquaintances of Lord and Lady Lincolnshire, lost two sons at Ypres. Julian Grenfell the poet, a Captain in the Royal Dragoons, was wounded in the same battle and on the same day as Wendover, and died aged 27

on 26th May 1915, in the same hospital in Boulogne. He was buried there in the Eastern Cemetery. Both sets of parents visited their sons before they died and exchanged heartfelt letters of condolence on returning to England.

Lieutenant Gerald (Billy) Grenfell, the younger brother of Julian, was killed, aged 25, on 30th July, leading a charge of the Rifle Brigade, within a mile of where Julian had been wounded. His body was not recovered but he is remembered on the Menin Gate. In the grounds of Taplow Court there is a stone monument to the Grenfell brothers. Created by Sir Bertram Mackennal, it depicts Apollo behind his chariot. Julian spoke of Apollo just before he died. Gerald managed to visit him in the hospital three days before he died but thought he would survive. Julian Grenfell's famous poem, written two weeks before he was wounded, *Into Battle*, was published for the first time in *The Times*, the day after his death. The last stanza reads:

*"The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air Death moans and sings;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings."*

This, like his earlier poetry, has an air of glorification of war, unlike the anger of later WW1 poets. Honour, duty, loyalty, and patriotism were the unquestioned values of the officer class.

David Snoxell

Prompt Service from Bucks Council

THANKS ARE DUE to Buckinghamshire Council Rights of Way Operations Team for responding promptly to our report of a blocked footpath at the rear of the hospital. The problem was reported to the Council on 25th November 2021. They arranged to inspect the site and then contacted the landowner. The right of way was reopened in mid-December, only three weeks after the initial report. This much-used footpath allows direct access to the hospital site and doctors' surgery for people walking down Tom Burt's Hill from Shelley Road, saving a detour to the bottom of the hill and back up again to the hospital and surgery entrance.



*"Before"
and "After"
(left & right
respectively)*



According to the BBC News site further changes are on the horizon regarding rights of way. The government is planning to remove the time limit for registering missing rights of way. There is a brief reference to a new process for recording rights of way and letting land-owners apply for changes, closures etc. The Open Spaces Society has initially welcomed the move, but also indicated that it is likely to oppose some of the proposed changes once details are available.

Val Hinkins

Notices

New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members:
Christopher Pearman

Obituaries

We regret to inform members of the deaths of:
Ian Sutherland
Angela Rees (see p8)

It's not too late to volunteer to man the Society's Art Exhibition in April. Please email volunteer@highwycombesociety.org.uk if you think you can help.

Fancy a day out by coach?

Thanks to our Treasurer, Colin Hingston, many Society members are among those who enjoy occasional day trips to interesting places by coach. If you would like to be on Colin's contact list to receive details of these opportunities, please contact Colin directly either by phone (0771-810-3603) or by email: colinehingston@aol.com

IMPORTANT - Don't miss!

THE High Wycombe Society Event this spring



Open Hours: 10am-4pm daily
Thursday: 10am-6pm

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 2022**.

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!!!**

2022	
Saturday 26 th March	HWBidCo's Spring Clean in the High Street (see p8)
Monday 4 th April Church Street 12.45 pm	An information board depicting Francis Colmer's pictures of the Black Boy pub will be unveiled in Church Street. This event has been timed to enable those who wish to attend the lunchtime concert at All Saints to do so.
Sat 16 th . Thurs 28 th April The Guildhall (High Wycombe)	<i>A Brush with Wycombe's Past.</i> The High Wycombe Society Art Exhibition, featuring works depicting High Wycombe High Street by William Hannan & others – Open Daily: 10am-4pm; Thursdays 10am-6pm Email volunteer@highwycombesociety.org.uk if you would like to help
Friday 29 th April	Coach Trip to Maldon and Stow Maries organised by Colin Hingston (see above)
Sunday 8 th May 11.00-5.00 pm Pann Mill	Pann Mill Open Day to coincide with National Mills weekend. Mary Woodman has kindly volunteered to co-ordinate bookings for stalls. She can be contacted via email on pannmillstalls@highwycombesociety.org.uk
Saturday 28 th May	Mayor-making including the traditional weighing of the Mayor
Thursday 19 th May	Coach Trip to Amberley Museum organised by Colin Hingston (see above)
2 nd -5 th June	Platinum Jubilee weekend – HWBidCo are promising "family fun"
Friday 10 th June	AGM – Details to be confirmed
Sunday 10 th July 11.00-5.00 pm Pann Mill	Pann Mill Open Day
Sunday 11 th September 11.00-5.00 pm Pann Mill	Pann Mill Open Day to coincide with Heritage Open Days
Saturday 1 st October	BLHN 2022, the annual Local History Network conference organised by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society on the theme of "Education" in 2022. Planned venue: the Oculus in Aylesbury.