

# The Wivenhoe Society

1970-1

NEWSLETTER No. 4

Dear Member,

We have now a new Chairman. At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society, held on Tuesday, 20th October, in the Public Hall, Professor B. M. Barry, of 5, Beech Avenue, Wivenhoe, was elected to this post, in succession to Mr. Hew Naylor, who has held office for the past eighteen months.

We owe our retiring Chairman a good deal. He has chaired numerous Committee and Public Meetings, usually at the end of a day's work in the City and, as his magnum opus, drafted the new Constitution which we have since adopted. Although unwilling, because of pressure of work, to continue in office, he nevertheless did so until a successor could be found. Accordingly, a vote of thanks was passed, cum plaudite, for his hard work on our behalf.

## Wivenhoe: Planning for the Future

After Professor Barry's election, the meeting was then addressed by Mr. Denys Turberville, who is an Assistant Registrar at the University of Essex, our member for the Essex County Council and a member of the Society.

He left us in no doubt that amenity societies have a necessary role to play, for while the County Council plans ahead, it cannot, with its limited resources, be a watchdog on all local matters. Besides, conservation was, in Mr. Turberville's opinion, an art rather than a science, which means that County Hall cannot hand down the infallibly "right" solution to any given issue. It is for us to say what sort of future we want for Wivenhoe.

And indeed the Society is anxious to help plan the future as a question put to the meeting on this topic proved, something which the Committee will bear in mind.

After the talk, a general discussion followed in which most of the 47 persons present took part. We put our problems to Mr. Denys Turberville and he made copious notes of the same. It was a most successful meeting and an informative one.

## The New Posters

Those who preach aesthetics should practice the same; accordingly we have engaged the talents of one of our members, Mr. Alan Taylor, to design a poster, whose basic design we shall use for the next year or so. It has already been voted a great success and everybody I have approached has been very willing to exhibit one.

### Audley End

Mr. Naylor's last piece of organisation was to arrange an outing to Audley End, which took place on a Sunday in late September. We had perfect weather for our visit. It was a hot day with a gentle haze and on the lawn in front of the house there was a game of cricket in progress.

Audley End was begun in 1603 and in 1720 remodelled by Vanbrugh, the architect of Blenheim Palace. Later, Robert Adam was employed on some of the interiors. It is a beautiful place, large, but as with most English country houses, not too large; formal, yet with its jumble of styles, from Jacobean to Strawberry Hill gothic, oddly informal as well. Once well-loved and well-lived in, it is now, thanks to the Ministry of Works, well preserved, a tribute to a quality in the human spirit which the Elizabethan poet, Edmund Spenser, rated as high as a virtue - Magnificence.

### The Rowhedge Ferry Road

In June, 1967, J. Gliksten & Son Limited declared publicly, in the "Essex County Standard", that they had no intention of closing the Rowhedge Ferry Road. At the beginning of last year it seemed that not only might we lose the road, but that we should lose it without the decency of a public inquiry. However, we obtained our Inquiry and put up a sturdy defence of our right of way when it took place. The decision, to close the middle section of the road, is unfortunate, a volte face from the Inspector's previous findings, but no one could say that the case for conservation was not put as well as it possibly could be - far better, we feel, than that of our opponent's. The Wivenhoe Society is not despondent as to the result. Had we not fought it might well be that we should have lost a right of way altogether by now.

Meanwhile, although the entrance to the road has been disguised as the entrance to a factory works, a right of way remains and I take this opportunity to remind you that the Council expressed concern at a recent Committee Meeting about a breach of planning permission by J. Gliksten & Son Limited.

We will continue vigorously to uphold all rights of way in Wivenhoe, but, as we are at last beginning to realize, the presence of this firm in the town has presented the community with a problem far, far greater than any encroachment on the saltings.

For the heavy lorries used by the firm are threatening to destroy the High Street up which they must inevitably come. Clearly, it was a blunder to invite heavy industry to a site where its activities would present such a problem to the town but now that it has happened there would seem to be three bad ways of resolving this unfortunate situation.

The first is to widen the High Street and so destroy the character of the town. The second is to limit Gliksten's to its present size and to set limits on the number and size of the lorries passing up and down the High Street. The third is to build a second access road out of Wivenhoe, either along the route of Footpath No. 8 or in or near Wivenhoe Wood.



I will not attempt to suggest which solution we should press for, but merely to indicate the problem and to say that it is the town's biggest problem and one which we must now face before it is too late. I have a letter to hand from our Member of Parliament, Mr. Julian Ridsdale, who agrees with me that the High Street was never designed to carry heavy traffic.

Such is the real problem set by Gliksten's to Wivenhoe and which we shall presently try to answer.

#### Footpath No. 8

We had hoped to make this our project for European Conservation Year. Nevertheless, at last we have taken this matter in hand. Following the creation of a Conservation Group in the University of Essex Association, a joint working party was formed a fortnight ago to make a start by bridging the 25 foot gap in the footpath between Wivenhoe and the Hythe. At the time of writing a bridge has been half constructed, lacking only the cross-pieces which we shall return to nail into place, and by the time this Newsletter reaches you it should be again possible to walk along the footpath from Wivenhoe up to the University and beyond into Colchester.

We are grateful to Mr. Stewart Linsell, the Warden of the Fingringhoe and Wick Nature Reserve (who addressed the Society in May last) for giving us two stout telegraph poles and two sleepers, to Mrs. Lockwood for arranging transport to the Reserve, to Captain John Cragie for towing them upstream in his launch, to our Treasurer for supervising their delivery to the site, and to Mr. Graham Jenkins, an undergraduate at the University, for organising the building of the bridge.

It is, we hope, the beginning of a working relationship between this Society and the University Conservation Group and of our practical work in the field on behalf of our environment.

#### A Wine and Cheese Party - Friday, 20th November, 1970

The admission is five shillings, the venue the Large Committee Room of the Public Hall, the time eight o'clock. As well as the wine (two glasses thrown in with admission - after that unlimited amounts but you have to pay), the cheese, and a chance to talk to other members, attractions will include a folk group and one or two slides from the visit to Audley End. I look forward to meeting you there for a friendly chat - not all of it about conservation - and for a chance to meet especially our new members.

#### Conference - Sunday, 6th December, 1970

The word sounds a little bleak, but we feel that this will be an important and productive meeting of the Society.

One reads continually in the local newspapers of groups like ourselves, who are doing what they can for their local communities, some successfully, some seemingly fighting desperate battles. Clearly, we should do something to

help each other. The question is, what?

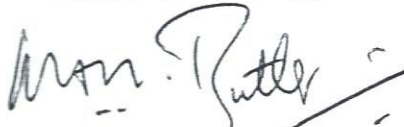
To try to discover the answer we are holding a meeting on the above-mentioned date, at 2.30 p.m. in the Public Hall, at which five different speakers will talk each for about fifteen minutes on what is happening in their particular corner of Essex. To date we have received acceptances from Mr. Michael Archer of The Dedham Vale Preservation Group, Major Basil Kentish of Kelvedon, Mr. Tom Judson of Manningtree and Mr. John Osborn of The St. John's Green Preservation Association. The chairman will be Mr. Ralph Dreschfield, C.M.G., the Secretary of The Council for the Protection of Rural England in Essex, who was one of the barristers in the Rowhedge Ferry Road Public Inquiry. We need one more speaker to make up the team. I hope that you will come along, ask questions and afterwards have tea with the speakers.

Miscellaneous

In January, we shall probably have a talk from Mr. Ronald Geary, the architect who designed the Scheregate Steps project in Colchester, and the A.G.M. will be in March.

The Society has donated £5 to the Church Tower Restoration Fund and £3. 3. 0d to the Tennis Club.

Yours sincerely,

  
N. A. M. BUTLER

STOP PRESS

The bridge across the gap in footpath No.8 has been completed. Barring some catastrophe, it will now be possible to walk from Wivenhoe to the Hythe with dry feet except at high tide, when the bridge is liable to be covered. Congratulations are due to all involved, including the Secretary, who modestly omitted to mention his own essential role in getting the thing organized properly. Next week: Alresford Creek....

BMB  
9 November 1970