

The Committee have met regularly during the year and have endeavoured to keep in mind the main object of the Society "To exert a strong local influence to safeguard the amenities of Harpenden".

In January 1970, Col. G.B.M. Scutt, a Vice President of the Society, died, and the Committee place on record their appreciation of his interest in the work of the Society. Capt. K. Hills Bond, M.C., writes - "In nearly every voluntary organisation there is usually one member whose special self-chosen role is to see that the interest in the society's aims and objects does not flag, to seek and find new officers when vacancies arise and to ensure that its administration is efficient. His supreme value is well known by the committee, but too often passes unrecognised by the other members. He does not seek such recognition but is always tireless in his efforts. Such a man was Martin Scutt, one of the Harpenden Society's vice presidents. As a founder member of the Society and its first honorary secretary I have been in a privileged position to know what it owed to his devotion to our aims and what it owed to his wise counsels and his sustaining determination that the Society should exercise the greatest possible influence in preserving the character of the town where he and his wife had made their home nearly forty years ago."

Summer Outing

This year a most successful visit was arranged by Mr. Lorimer Green to Ascott near Leighton Buzzard to see the residence of Mr. & Mrs. Antony de Rothschild with its treasures of porcelain and pictures.

Autumn Meeting

The increasing concern, comment and discussion about pollution of our environment and the attempts to initiate remedial action prompted us to consider one aspect of this problem at our Autumn Meeting. Dr. Owens of the Water Pollution Research Laboratory at Stevenage gave an illustrated address on "A Biologist looks at Water Pollution" and showed some of the dangers arising from an imbalance of the natural cycle.

Planning Applications

There have been three major planning applications during the year. The appropriate committees of the Society considered these very carefully before making their views known to the responsible authorities.

The general layout of the Sainsbury's site in the High Street was welcomed but we expressed our concern about some aspects of the architectural character of the design and the detailed working out of the scheme.

The second major project was the proposed extensions at the Rothamsted Experimental Station. The Urban District Council refused planning permission and it was proposed that the appeal should be dealt with by written representation to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. We supported the action of the Council although your Committee felt that an enquiry should be held in public and agreed with their contention that the proposed building would be injurious to the visual amenities of Rothamsted Park.

The third major scheme is the proposed widening of Redbourn Lane by taking part of Hatching Green and the Common and land adjacent. We consider these proposals to be unnecessary and undesirable and have so informed the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the County Council.

It is difficult for some members of the public to view plans etc. of major developments of this kind which the Council puts on display in their offices, and we hope that in due course arrangements can be made to enable viewing to be done when the Council offices are closed.

We would like to take this opportunity of recording our appreciation of the way the Council considers any points we raise with them or suggestions we make to them and the help and guidance we receive from the Council's officers - particularly the Clerk and Surveyor.

Changes in Harpenden

In co-operation with the Urban Design Group we have working parties considering the Town Centre Development, Car parking on the Common and we have initiated discussions with them as to the possible development of the Lea Valley as a recreational area. Other matters being considered are the provision of a town's notice board and a bus shelter for southbound passengers. The Town Centre Development is probably the most important single thing and it will affect everybody who lives in Harpenden.

We appreciated the problem the Council had in deciding the future of the Silver Cup Pond. With such knowledge as we had at our disposal we regretfully came to the conclusion that there seemed no practical alternative to filling the pond in but we have suggested to the Council that they consider the possibility of providing alternative facilities for Harpenden people near the swimming pool using, if possible, chlorinated water from the existing plant. The existing car park could, of course, then reduce the parking problem on the Common at weekends and holiday times.

Ladacan

We have continued to support the Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise and have sent a contribution in response to the appeal for funds which will be needed to represent LADACAN'S case against the proposed extension to the airport buildings at a public enquiry in March. Noise from aircraft using Luton Airport, particularly during the summer months, has continued to increase and the proposals for major developments at the airport are a direct threat to the comparative peace which Harpenden residents can still enjoy.

Conservation Year

1970 is European Conservation Year. More than 20 European countries are joining together to focus attention on the way we affect and change the lands we live in by our various activities - as individuals and as communities. As the Countryside Commission says - "We may all clamour for new airports, a better road network, more jobs, more new towns to house us and ignore the problem of fitting these into a relatively small area with a large population. Yet all these things must be fitted in together with the needs of food and timber production and of leisure and recreation. without destroying

the quality of the environment." There will be many international and national conferences to consider the main themes of the Year and to propose guidelines for the next decade. But the vital part will be the events organised by local amenity groups. Your General Committee is considering how the Society can make its contribution to the Year.

Leisure Exhibition

For the first time the Society will take part in the Harpenden Spotlight on Leisure Exhibition in April. We hope to make the aims of the Society more widely known.

The Committee wishes to express its thanks to Miss Finney for allowing it to meet at Mary-Allen's Cafe, to the Plans sub-committee for their technical advice and to Mr. A.R. McCrae who has asked us to appoint a successor.

Suggestions have been made that there should be more frequent meetings and activities for the members. The Chairman will refer to this in the Annual General Meeting. Comment and ideas for the Committee to discuss will be most welcome.

The Annual subscription is not less than five shillings per member or 7/6d for members of the same family and is due on January 1st. This very modest sum makes it uneconomic to have to send out reminders so please pay your subscription to the Membership Secretary, Mr. C.M. King of 27 Milton Road, or put it in the box provided at Mary-Allen's Cafe.

For the General Committee

G.W. Bowran

Hon. Secretary.

28 Feb.1970.