

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY
Annual Report for the year 1958

Much concern over the likely loss of iconic Church Green cottages & the proposed Arden Grove development

The year 1958 was one in which an increasing demand for building land threatened some of our open spaces whilst in the village itself, proposed rebuilding raised doubts that the rural character and appearance of the village would be changed for the worse.

The results of the enquiry into proposed development of the land between Crabtree Lane and Piggottshill Lane have been promulgated in favour of its retention as farm land.

Two or three years ago permission was given to build in Townsend Lane a house, the site of which was to be permanent open space according to the plan of Harpenden (1951-1973) prepared by the County Planning Department. This thin edge of the wedge has been used by the Planning Department to authorize further building without any opportunity being given to the public to state their views. Your Committee took strong objection to this pre-emptive procedure which allows an alteration of the plan by consequent development. The loss of Townsend Lane as a country walk is of less importance than the principle involved.

Much concern has been shown because Nos. 11 to 13 Church Green have been put up for sale as a building site. These ivy hidden cottages are some 200 years old and an internal inspection shows that they are so damp and inconvenient by modern standards that their demolition is now due.

More definite was the controversy over Nos. 1, 2 & 3 Arden Grove in which your Committee supported the Council in their decision not to allow these well built and 'eminently desirable' residences to be knocked down to make way for a car park, offices and shops. Our view was that the shops should be built where they are most needed at Batford and Southdown and so save the shoppers a long pram haul. At the enquiry the Council's decision was overruled. The strip of Shrubbery with Laburnum and Conifers facing Station Road is the property of the Council and it is sincerely hoped will be retained as one of the refreshing features of Harpenden, particularly for those who arrive at Harpenden by train.

The Rothamsted Park Gate Pillars, to the design of our Member Mr. Shoosmith, have now been completed although some paving remains to be done. A contribution of £25 to the cost of the plaque, not yet placed, may be made by your Society.

On Saturday, 12th July, rather later in the year than usual, a Coach party of some 30 members and friends visited West Wycombe Village, House and Park and after tea viewed the unusual 'Dashwood' Church.


Arrangements have been made for Sir Mortimer Wheeler to revisit us and give a lecture entitled "Human Progress" on Monday, 4th May.

In South Harpenden a Residents Association has been formed with which it is hoped we shall be able to collaborate.

I should like to put on record my appreciation of the help and co-operation given in several minor matters by the Council together with their Officials and Staff. Harpenden is fortunate in being represented by Council Members who are willing to devote a great deal of their time to Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

There was a small increase in membership during the year but the number of Members is only about 1% of the population and I think Harpenden could do better than this.

Prior advice of any questions to be raised at the meeting will be appreciated.


E. BARLOW,

Hon. Secretary

February, 1959.