

"HERITAGE 1975 - THE YEAR LISTED BUILDINGS REALLY HIT THE DUST". This is the verdict of House and Garden Journal on European Architectural Year, as it affected Britain. And as the dust settles other experts are commenting on the hypocrisy of the celebrations during which so many valuable buildings and terraces were lost. Perhaps the lesson for us is that we must not be lulled into believing that, because the tide of opinion is turning in our favour, we need no longer be vigilant. Generalised concern, it is proved, is not enough - it must be brought to bear forcibly, upon particular places. Fortunately planning authorities now consult local amenity groups about proposals within conservation areas. It is impossible to gather the views of all members, but your committee submits comments according to the principles of our conservation policy. Perhaps the most vital of which are:-

1. That the village should remain compact and well-defined and that extension into "white" land should be resisted.
2. That infilling should relate to the individual site and to linked buildings.
3. That design, scale and materials should be complimentary to the unique character of the village.

Decisions, of course, rest finally with the planning authorities, but we now have a voice. It's up to members to elect a concerned and informed committee to make itself heard and respected.

1974 saw the birth of the Upwey Society. Last year Dorchester (a late delivery) Society arrived and we are now expecting in Owermoigne. Villagers there, alarmed by plans to culvert a pleasant village stream, are joining to form a group. In fact there are now few self-respecting Dorset villages which have not siezed the opportunity to contribute their local knowledge and effort and awareness in order to make the complex planning machinery and provisions really effective.

Our Pond threw up a particularly virulent growth of weed during the old-fashioned summer, and members put in a lot of old-fashioned work clearing it all out, while Mr. Saunders sheltered the startled ducks. The suggestion for a Bench Seat has been taken up, and we look forward to it's arrival. The design, being executed by a Weymouth school, is for a simple, stout, stone supported bench which should be thoroughly in keeping with it's site, under the willows.

Research is being conducted on another bright idea, for discreet Plaques on some of our noteworthy buildings; a rural equivalent of the now famous blue-and-white L.C.C. plaques.

How about a Village Float for this summer's Weymouth Carnival? An opportunity to demonstrate our existence and to support this annual drive on behalf of needy local charities. Mr. Litschi (833303) would welcome ideas and effort.

As we go to press the Sutton Poyntz Players are polishing their opening performance of "The Mellstock Quire", another clever Thomas Hardy adaption, for Saturday March 6th. Entrance is by lucky number programmes, obtainable from Mrs. Litschi, which are selling fast. (See "For your Diary"). This small drama group has harnessed amazing local talent and has put on a series of highly successful shows in the area.

The Society's First Tree is beginning to bud, and is now just tall enough to be spied over Mr. Saunder's wall, opposite the Mill House Gate. Mr. Presswell has kindly contributed Tree No. 2, which Mr. Diment has agreed may be planted on the bank alongside Puddledock Lane. Not a good score for the eight years of our existence and to set against the many losses, but encouraging.

The Council for the Protection of Rural England, to which we are affiliated, is feeling the financial strain in this, it's Jubilee year. I wonder how proud we could be of Dorset now, were it not for the work of the C.P.R.E. over the past 50 years? To swell their coffers they are showing "Britain Beautiful", a remarkable pictorial show, on April 7th at Digby Hall, Sherborne; at St. Mary's Puddletown on the 8th., and at Woodmead Hall, Lyme Regis on the 9th.

Our Annual General Meeting will be on April 2nd. This meeting of the Society is a chance for you to check on achievements, put forward ideas, offer effort, and to elect your next committee. Nominations please to Chairman Bob Fenton or Secretary Molly Hanson. This year we plan to have two short films, after business proceedings, to refresh our sensitivity to the cause of conservation in village and coast.

Events of the past year included:-

The Ladies' (emancipated!) Midsummer Walk, delightful as always.

The autumn Visit to The Waterworks, together with Civic Society friends, was informative, and great fun to trespass inside the iron railings at last.

Tea on the Lawn unhappily became tea in the Mission Hall, but many thanks to Anne Medcalf who as hostess was heartbroken but as keen gardener was grateful for the downpour.

The Bonfire Party gathered many families to an evening of exciting (and safe) thrills.

The November Social, with interlude sketch by Sutton Poyntz Players, was well attended and a justification for all the hard work.

The Christmas Carollers raised the roof and £14. for the Handicapped at The Weymouth Training Centre.

Two Recent Lectures, an experimental Purbeck scheme for keeping our coastline groomed, and on Portland history, helped to keep us alive to our responsibilities and our heritage.

All these items involved work, and were dependant on the efforts of many members, to whom we are grateful.

FOR YOUR DIARY

- March 6th. Saturday, Scutt Hall, 7.30p.m.
The Sutton Poyntz Playors present "The Mellstock Quire", adapted by Ken Nicklen from Thomas Hardy's "Under the Greenwood Tree". Remember "The Trumpet Major" and "The Three Wayfarers"? This is the third Hardy production by the Players, and their first full length play.
Entrance by lucky-number programme, 20p. adults., 10p. children, obtainable from Mrs. Litschi.
- April 2nd. Friday, Mission Hall, 7.30p.m., Our own Annual General Meeting and films.
- April 7th. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
8th.
and 9th. at Sherborne, Puddletown and Lyme Regis. 7.30p.m. - 9p.m.
C.P.R.E.'s "BRITAIN BEAUTIFUL", by Stanley Jeeves of "Second Ark" fame. Details from Joy Shires or Joyce Litschi.
- April 10th. Saturday, Scutt Hall 8p.m.
Sutton Poyntz Society Social with a country flavour.
Tickets, 75p. soon from committee members.