

# Stoneygate Conservation Area Society

NEWSLETTER  
AUGUST 1998



## CONSERVATION AREA MARKED OUT

*New signs boost total to 35 as city council moves towards defining a character statement for Stoneygate*



*(ABOVE): Signs in the area are positioned at a higher level to deter vandalism following loss of two of the 10 signs supplied by Sandown and Alexandra Road residents. The new ones were supplied by the Community Conservation Department using money left over from last year's budget.*

STONEYGATE Conservation area signs are located in the vicinities of:  
Elms Road: Knighton Road (3):  
Knighton Drive: Southernhay Road:  
Stoneygate Road: Clarendon Park Road (2):  
Knighton Park Road:  
Holmfield Road: London Road (3):  
Elmfield Road: St. Mary's Road: The Avenue:  
North Avenue: East Avenue:  
West Avenue: St. John's Avenue:  
Springfield Road: Albert Road: Avenue Road Extension:  
Alexandra Road:  
Toller Road: Sandown Road:  
Stoneygate Avenue; Ratcliffe Road:  
Stoughton Drive.

STONEYGATE is to be the first conservation area in Leicester to have its own 'blueprint' which the local authority is compiling on central council advice.

The need to define such areas countrywide became obvious after a decision on a London infill site was challenged when the authority concerned, having no character statement, chose to make judgement on the issue.

"We have already got a statement in draft form for Stoneygate which is our largest conservation area. Maybe SCAS can become involved," said city council spokesman, George Wilson, who is a graphic designer, photographer and presentation assistant.

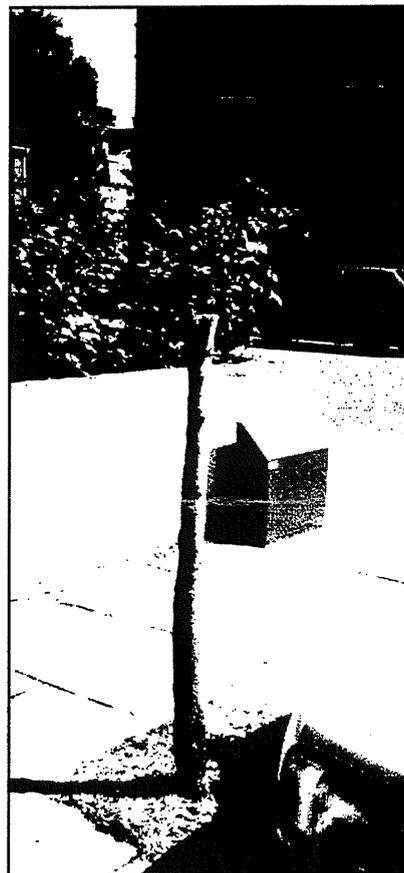
He also revealed a plan to remove redundant posts and poles that are currently standing in streets for no apparent reason.

"They could have been bearing notices and signs long gone - now they are just unsightly.

"Another thing we would like to do is fit traffic signs to boundary walls if owners, the police and traffic people agree," Mr Wilson added.

*(RIGHT): Forlorn post with a difference. This stark piece of wood at the West Avenue/Clarendon Park Road junction once supported a young tree. The council has no tree maintenance cash available to replace it.*

**TWO MODERN HOUSES IN SCAS AREA GET GRADE II LISTING**  
TWO out of 24 or so of the modern private houses in England recently given Grade II listing are on Avenue Road and Ratcliffe Road.



**W**E CAME to Leicester in 1958, the year when the university received its Royal Charter from The Queen: a rather grand occasion attended by Vice-Chancellors in multi-coloured robes from all over Europe.

The order went out that ladies must wear hats and it was all very festive with balls, formal dinners and garden parties. Only 79 years earlier the main building had been the County Asylum; the long low nurses' building was still there and it was said that the alcoves in the library had been padded cells.

There happened to be in the Sixties some talented people around, well-known in their own fields, but with many and varied interests.

Arthur Humphries, the much-loved head of the English Department, was a musician and an architectural enthusiast. Two theatres had been closed in Leicester and he led the protest movement to save the elegant Theatre Royal, but it failed. He also tried to save a Victorian Gothic house, Stoneygate Farm on the site of what is now Duke's Drive; it was said that he was so concerned that he nearly bought it.

That we now have two professional theatres in the city is owed to Philip Collins, who called a meeting of 'all those interested in

## UNIVERSITY LINKS WITH STONEYGATE

*PADDY FRASER  
recalls how some of  
Leicester University's  
talented academics left their mark  
in and around the  
area during the 1960s.*

having a theatre in Leicester.' As a result of his efforts The Phoenix opened in 1964 and The Haymarket in 1973.

Arthur Humphries brought into the English Department talents from outside: G S Fraser, the poet and critic was one and Richard Hoggart (who lived in Central Avenue) was another.

Hoggart, already famous for his *Uses of Literacy* and a bold, independent spirit, was noted recently for some hard-hitting books on the state of England. He was a witness in the Lady Chatterley trial, defending Penguin books when attempts were made to ban it as obscene. Giving an hilarious account of the proceedings on return, he remembered the Prosecution's memorable remark: 'Is this a book you would give your wife or maidservant to read?'

William Cooper, author of *Scenes from Provincial Life*, and father of the 'campus novel' was a Leicester man - so too was C P Snow who did his first degree in science at Leicester.

Malcolm Bradbury, now a well-known critic and novelist, based his first novel, *Eating People is Wrong*, on Leicester University. The story goes that he was about to be sent down for not working and then surprised everyone by getting a first.

Philip Larkin was an Assistant Librarian here for a short period in 1946 and later often visited Leicester as he had friends here.

A shy man, he did not like too much attention, but often enjoyed a Sunday lunchtime drink at The Clarendon in West Avenue.

There is a legend that Kingsley Amis on a visit to Larkin at the university looked at the Senior Common Room and said: 'One could write a novel about this.'

Indeed some things in *Lucky Jim* remind one of Leicester. Philip Larkin lodged in Dixon Drive, Stoneygate; Jim's surname is Dixon. Both writers went on to become famous.

### NEXT SCAS MEETING

Wednesday 2 September 1998 at 6.30pm

ANOTHER WALKABOUT with RICHARD GILL

Meet outside St. John's Parish Centre, Clarendon Park Road

Book your place (£2 per person) with Odette Fogler

### PLEASE LET SCAS HAVE YOUR IDEAS AND INFORMATION

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### STONEYGATE CONSERVATION AREA SOCIETY

I/we wish to join the Society/renew membership and enclose cash/cheque for £2.50 (family per year) as from 1st April 1998. Please make cheques payable to Stoneygate Conservation Area Society.

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Title) ..... Tel: .....

Address: ..... Postcode: .....

(Please send to: Odette Fogler, Membership Secretary, 5 Calbri Court, 37 Knighton Drive, Leicester LE2 3HD. Tel: 270 5623)