

SPALDING & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October 2016

We're all of us very ready to complain or criticise. For a change, let's remind ourselves of some of the things that make Spalding a pleasant place in which to live and work. Things we too often take for granted or perhaps don't even notice.

No, not a birthday card or seed packet. Just part of the vivid variety that makes up the market. Fruit and fish, spices, jeans, bird seed, seat-pads and padlocks, meat, bread, CDs and shoes. With occasional surprises: sheepskins, wooden toys, garden ornaments, tea.

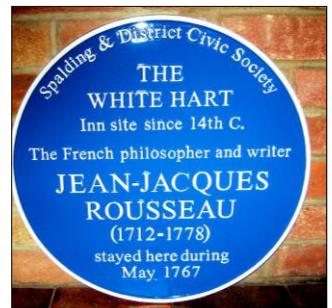


SPALDING

A ribbon of green tranquillity through the centre. Swans, ducks, grebes, all just a stone's throw from the market place.



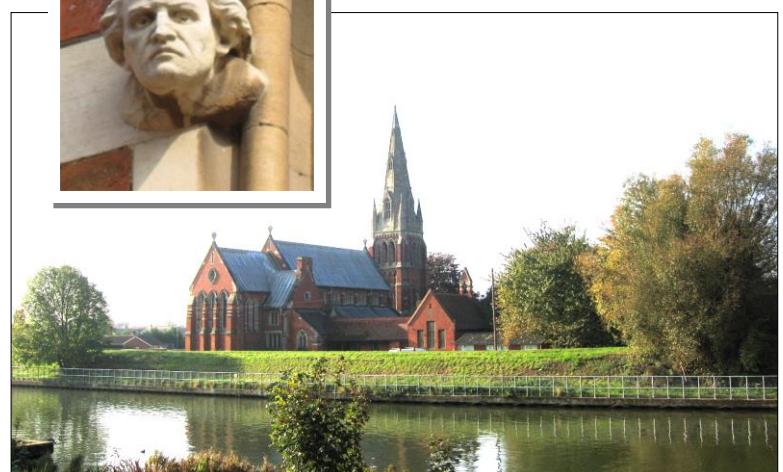
On the run from those he now considered his enemies, why did this renowned European philosopher spend a week here, and have a blue coat made?



Carved heads on Lloyd's Bank, all different.



Ornate brickwork on Edwardian houses.



St. Paul's Church – a scene Constable might have enjoyed today.

ROADS TO NOWHERE

A SPANKING NEW ROAD to reduce traffic congestion in the centre of Spalding. Sounds great. This South Western Relief Road would skirt the town from Luck's Bridge (Spalding Common) to Wardentree Lane (on the Pinchbeck Road). The bad news is that it won't have a middle section, not for 20 years or more. Just the outer sections – two bits of road to nowhere. Yet this is what the new Local Plan proposes.

Don't blame the planners, though. This nonsense has been forced on them by the government's doctrinaire demand that developers nowadays must pay for infrastructure, not the government. Strategic roads like the SWRR are enormously expensive of course, so it requires a lot of houses for a developer to be able to make the kind of profit that will finance such a road. Hence the size of Broadgate's Holland Park estate on Spalding Common (over 2000 houses), needed to pay for a section of the SWRR.

At the Pinchbeck end, a similar huge housing programme will be required to pay for the northern third – regardless of the fact that it will virtually join up Spalding and Pinchbeck. Obviously it is felt there will be developers ready to undertake this huge proposed development north of the Vernatt's.

No-one is yet sure, however, whether anyone will be interested in the middle section. Hence the gap.

We have put this analysis to both planning officers and John Hayes. They have not contested it.

The consequences for town-centre traffic scarcely bear thinking about. Traffic that would have used the SWRR to bypass the town, had it been complete, will still have to come through the centre. The huge developments supporting the two unconnected outer sections (roughly 6000 new households) will be meanwhile pumping extra vehicles onto the roads. (County Highways assesses an average of 8-10 vehicular movements a day per new urban household.) Most of them will be short urban journeys into Spalding, where the increased congestion will be further compounded by more trains on the up-graded railway line.

Further, one wonders where all the extra residents will be working, and whether there won't be a lot more commuting to Peterborough – subverting the new Local Plan's aim to reduce the use of motor vehicles.

In terms of controlled organic growth, does Spalding really need roughly 15,000 extra residents during the next 20 years? On *these* sites? Or is it all being dictated by the government's perverse approach to funding infrastructure needs?

The Society believes that all transport infrastructure should be funded by central government; and is opposed to any development north of the Vernatt's.

(Footnote:- We had to wait a long time for the A16 bypass, but at least it didn't have a gap in the centre between Springfields and Platt's Bridge. Major roads were funded by the government in those days.)

A BRIDGE TOO LOW?

EACH OF THE TWO outer sections of the SWRR requires a bridge over the railway line. The bridge for the southern (Holland Park) section already has outline approval.

Network Rail has a big modernisation programme. It includes improving track and signalling, lengthening platforms, modernising station facilities, and further electrification. To provide room for the overhead gantries will require increasing the clearance of many existing road bridges over railway lines. It clearly makes sense for any *new* bridges to be built with possible electrification in mind and therefore enough clearance to accommodate the overhead gantries. Concern has been expressed as to whether the proposed Holland Park bridge will have the clearance necessary to meet the possible future electrification of the line. County Highways have assured us that this has been taken care of and that the bridge will be well and truly "future-proofed".

NEVERTHELESS, one begins to wonder if a South Western Relief Road (which may not be complete until 2050) is the right way to go about tackling Spalding's congested town centre. Technology races ahead. Interactive traffic signals able to monitor, direct and divert traffic, using sat-nav systems, cannot be far away, and together with 'slow town' controls could encourage through-traffic along less congested routes. Nor, without the SWRR, would there be all the extra traffic generated by the huge housing developments needed to pay for it.

In which case, the housing requirement for South Holland, instead of being concentrated on Spalding, could some of it be more sensibly spread amongst some of the smaller settlements.

Is the SWRR perhaps an expensive and out-dated exercise, tired and unimaginative, offering little real solution to our traffic congestion now or in 2036?

Paul Walls



MARKET ART UP-DATE

"WHERE are the other figures?" people have been asking. "We tried to follow the trail, but couldn't find half of them." We can only apologise. The explanation is that the missing figures are the ones intended for listed buildings – such as the Red Lion, the Prior's Oven and the Gentlemen's Society – but the necessary listed building consents had not come through by the time of the 'unveiling'. They have now; but it was then felt it would be nice to give the figures a small title-plate each, which has meant some further delay. All being well, we hope all Joseph Hillier's figures and the plates will be in place by the end of the month.

Meanwhile, the warmest of warm thanks to all who responded so generously to the Society's first-ever appeal, passing our target sum for this first commission comfortably. Indeed, just another £200 would see the target sum doubled – say, £20 a head from just 10 people? Or £10 from 20? If you haven't yet helped the project on its way, we hope you will consider it. It's not too late. Many members will have children or friends who no longer live in Spalding, but might like to contribute something for old times' sake and a small part in a project to celebrate our market-town heritage. Get in touch with them; let them know. (Page 8.)

The whole Market Art Project could not have got off the ground at all without the marvellous financial backing of arts organisation Transported. Any surplus from the appeal beyond our undertaking to Transported will of course be earmarked to help with the commissioning of further works in the Market Art Project.

The second commission is in fact already under way from Laury Dizengremel, artist in residence at Belvoir Castle. It will celebrate the historic May Hiring Fair (or Statutes), when farm workers and domestics were hired for the next twelve months, and thus link with the local people in Joseph's bronzes, most of them related in some way to South Holland's present-day food production and processing. One of Laury's most recent sculptures (*above*) was commissioned by Belton House to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Capability Brown, the landscape architect who created Kew Gardens and the magnificent parks that set off Burghley House, Blenheim and many more of our grandest country houses.



MUCH APPRECIATED

• **LCC Highways** for the urgent rescue of the two young trees planted in Hall Place a year ago, whose top-heavy crowns are now firmly supported and no longer in danger of snapping off from their slender stems.

• The new terrace of houses in **Holland Road**, whose exemplary attention to detailing puts to shame most of our other Edwardian imitations.

• All involved in the **East Midlands in Bloom** competition – SHDC parks department, participating shops and businesses, and the tireless volunteers – for their gold award for the third year running.

• **LCC Highways** again for the repairs to the block paving in Hall Place and the Market Place.

• The developers for starting at last to replace the long-empty eyesore premises in **Winsover Road** and **Victoria Street**.

• **Transported** for the Caribbean fizz they brought to this year's Pumpkin Parade.

• **Peterborough & Spalding Transport Forum** and their volunteers for securing permission from East Midlands Trains to smarten up the beds and planters at the railway station and so provide a better welcome to the town.

• The **market flower-stalls** (*right*) for their vivid carpets of colour, week in week out, that help to make shopping in the market the pleasure it is.



PLANNING MATTERS

THE NEXT FEW MONTHS will see one of the biggest changes in the street scene since the building of the Holland Market. Winsover Road has recently seen the demolition of the Paul Taylor's row of shops and the end wall of Brennan's Bar repaired, prior to new shops being built there and houses and flats along Short Street. There's also the forthcoming expansion of Aldi along with the demolition of the three adjoining shops (*see p.5*). As this is one of the main roads into Spalding, the changes are welcome, and it's hoped that other shops and businesses will be encouraged to upgrade their shops and offices. There is still plenty of room for improvement – e.g. the garish vinyl mess that is the new Mini Poli store, with its partially open waste skips (*p.5*). Closer to the centre, plans to convert the upper floor of the Hole-in-the-Wall pub into three flats have been refused. However, changes in our shopping needs and styles are bound to lead to changes in town-centre uses, with more conversions above shops.

**A warm welcome
Sue and M**

One utterly unexpected change is the application to convert the Sessions House in the Sheepmarket into a single dwelling. It is a listed building, of course, and no changes are envisaged to the external appearance. Changes are proposed internally, however, including the removal of the main court fittings, dock and former public seats. Further comment must await fuller scrutiny of the plans.

The former Jewson's site on Roman Bank has long been derelict and it's good to see proposals to develop one of

Spalding's major brownfield eyesores. The proposed three-storey building comprises a care-home for 90 elderly people and 30 retirement apartments, but it is disappointing that its design is so unattractively monolithic.

The government's recently announced £2 billion fund to develop brownfield sites is welcome, especially if it helps the building of affordable and social housing and is not used as a subsidy for commercial builders, who would prefer to build on green fields.

Robert West

GREEN LOSS

- SPALDING has barely half the public green space it should have for its size (*South Holland Local Plan 2006*).
 - The emerging *South East Lincolnshire Local Plan* makes no attempt to remedy this shortfall.
 - Instead, in May, the Council voted to reduce our green space even further, agreeing to hand over nearly half of the Severn Road Playing Field to its own housing company for development.
 - In so doing, the Planning Committee flatly contradicted itself. (A year earlier it had rejected a bid to take over the Chiltern Drive Playing Field for other purposes, owing to “the overall deficit of public recreational space within Spalding”.)
 - In so doing, it flouted its own policies to protect public recreational space (SG19 and LT2).
 - In so doing, it ignores the government’s drive to get brownfield sites developed in preference to greenfield and its recent f2 billion fund to assist this

- In so doing, it has given a clear signal to other developers, who will always want the easy option of greenfield sites.
 - When challenged recently, the Chairman of the Planning Committee said it was a matter of priorities: “desperately needed housing” versus “a field”.
 - The use of the dismissive “a field” for a source of fitness and well-being, the development of children’s social and sporting skills, community strength and enjoyment would seem to suggest that our green recreational spaces are indeed not safe in the Council’s hands.
 - Spalding is not alone. A similar threat, for example, faces Whitstable, Hythe and Horncastle.
 - One wonders, therefore, whether all our Spalding sports clubs could come together to defend not just their own pitches, should they be threatened, but all the town’s green recreational spaces.

SPALDING AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

I enclose a cheque for:- £8 for individual membership; £12 for 2 persons in the same household;
 Free if in full-time education; Details of a standing order mandate.

Name.....

Address.....

Post Code..... Telephone..... E-mail.....

Please send to: Melvyn Price (Hon.Treasurer), 34 Avebury Gardens, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2EN.



IT GETS WORSE

THE VINYL BLIGHT SPREADS. **Winsover Road** – In addition to the usual blanking out, the garish spread here has been carried up onto the gable end and the first floor windows. Both contrary to SHDC policies and practice. Enforcement, please.

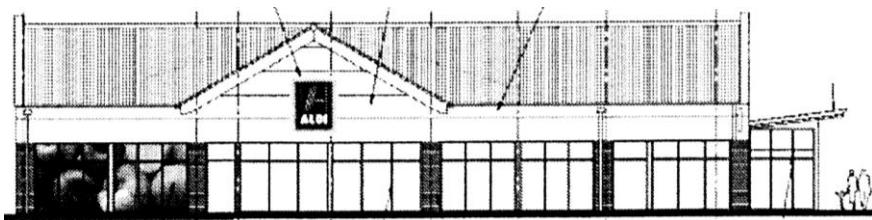
Station Street – For all its visual assault on the Conservation Area, it's difficult to know what goods or services are being offered. So much for the supposed effectiveness of in-your-face advertising.

London Road – The Conservation Area again. Shiny blankness, completely at odds with the character of the riverside.



AND WORSE

Aldi's application to expand along Winsover Road. The plan shows a thoughtful re-allocation of parking for disabled people and parents with children, and keeps the important pedestrian access from Winsover Road (unlike the deplorable B&M across the road). But it beggars belief that the store thinks it will be "respecting and enhancing the environmental context" by obliterating its quality brickwork with white render or replacing it with aluminium board covered in jumbo apples and tomatoes. It begins to feel like an SF horror film, with the town invaded by gigantic fruit and sausages. You wouldn't think the Aldi directors would have wanted to appear to be lining themselves up with the kind of mini-markets the police raid for contraband cigarettes and spirits. They should look at Wilko's to see how stores can make attractive use of windows without losing floor space. (We have objected to the gross vinyls and loss of quality brickwork.)



(See p.7 for one shop that is beginning a fight-back.)

AND BETTER

It's encouraging to note the thought and imagination now going into the window dressing of some of the town-centre shops. It can't be easy for a dry-cleaner's or a hair-dresser's, but it's not impossible, as **Layton's** (*top right*) and **Hedonist** show. (Layton's mini-mannequin has a regular dress change, and there's a mini-male too. Hedonist in Broad Street currently has hair-care products in a beach bag on a driftwood crate, with sea-shells and toy yacht, all in muted blues, purples and grey.) Or there's **Beale's**, with a tower of board-games and teddybears, or **M&Co**, with a still-life of towels and cushions showing deer, grouse and pheasants, all in autumn greys and browns. **Hill's Department Store** is as inventive as ever. And **Wilko's** knows that a display of goods, changing month by month, is not only visually pleasing in itself but attracts into the store passers-by who might otherwise not have bothered. The 60cm loss of floor space is negligible. One window at the moment has a display of decorating materials and equipment (*bottom right*), and the other all you need for Halloween. During this brief survey, it was noticeable how people stopped to look at the goods where shops windows had an attractive display. Blanked-out windows must surely mean a loss of custom. No-one stops to look at giant peppers. They're not just a blight on the town centre, but also, it would seem, self-defeating.



AT LARGE

2.2 BILLION

THE GOVERNMENT is finally recognising the potential of brownfield development. It has pledged 90% of suitable brownfield sites will have planning permission by 2020. More than 70 councils across England have now trialled registers of available brownfield land. The government has committed £2.2 billion to be spent on brownfield regeneration over the next five years.

However, whilst the government is pledging more support for brownfield development, its planning policies still make it too easy to build on greenfield

land. There is a misconception that building on brownfield land is not practical, as it is in short supply and too slow or inconvenient to use.

In 2014, the CPRE proved there is enough brownfield land in England to build over a million homes. In March this year they published new research to strengthen a ‘brownfield first’ policy. It showed that brownfield land is actually being built out six months faster than greenfield, making it a more effective solution for speeding up house building. (*Information from CPRE.*)

7.6 BILLION

ENGLAND’S PLASTIC BAG CHARGE was a long time coming, and critics predicted its exemptions for small stores and paper bags would diminish its effectiveness. In fact, in the first six months, the number of single-use plastic bags handed out by the seven biggest supermarkets fell by more than 85% from 7.6bn a year in 2014 to 600m. In that period, the levy raised more than £29m for charities.

Billions fewer plastic bags in six months is a fantastic success for the environment..... For analysts such as David Powell of the New Economics Foundation, the unequivocal success of the 5p plastic bag charge shows that government shouldn’t be afraid of using financial “nudges” in new environmental regulations. “Introduce the right charge in the right way and people respond to it.”

However, plastic bags amounted to just 2% of beach rubbish. Powell suggests a charge on coffee

cups is a next step. “There are piles of coffee cups everywhere. It’s an obvious problem that people are keen to do something about.”

Others, though, think the next win-win regulation that would benefit consumers, industry and the environment is a deposit-return system for drinks bottles. Such systems are used in dozens of European countries from Germany to Croatia. Reverse vending machines that give people, say, 20p for their bottles and cans deliver recycling rates of up to 90%, provide high-grade recyclable materials, and save councils’ costs, they say. If placed on shop floors, they also encourage footfall.

“We all know that litter breeds litter. If you can take these visible litter items out of the environment, it will have a knock-on effect and everyone will treat their environment better.” (Patrick Barkham: *The Guardian*.)

EXCURSIONS

The Society is planning to offer some excursions in the coming months. It would help us enormously to know how many of you would be interested in each of them. You would not be committing yourself at this stage, just indicating a definite interest in one or more. Please let Marion Brassington know by phone (01775 767923) or email (marion.brassington@btinternet.com) or filling in the slip below.

Yes, I am interested in :- [] Magistrates Court ,
[] Boat Trip, [] Peterborough Museum.

Name

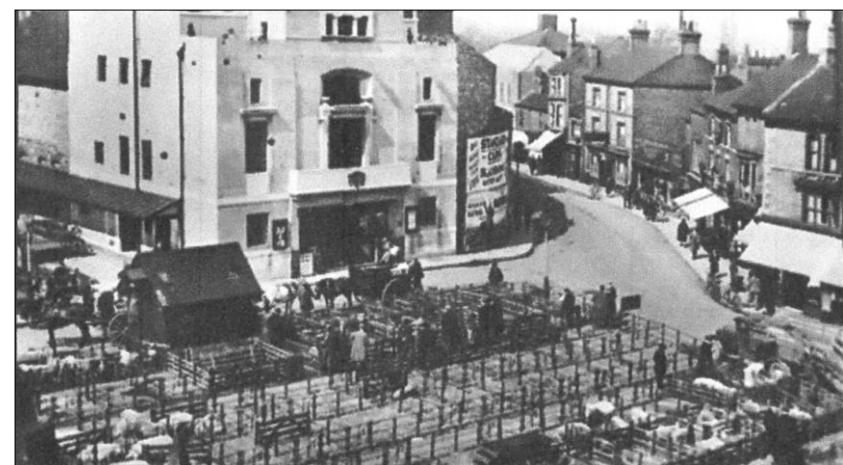
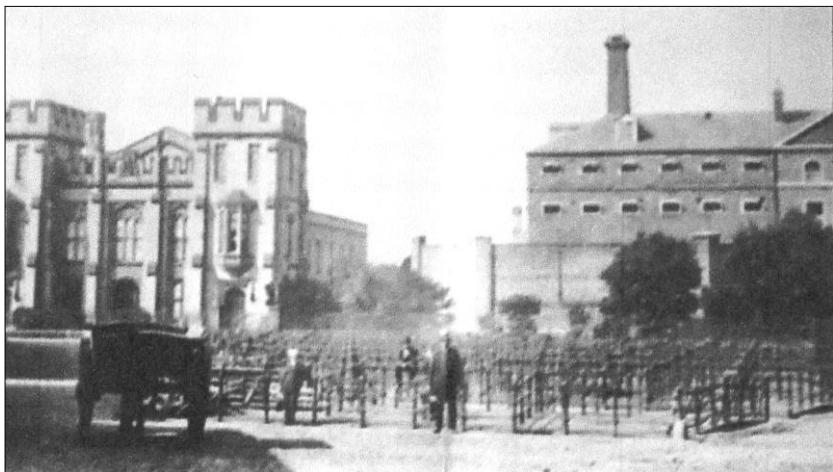
Please send to: Marion Brassington, 55 Pinchbeck Road,
Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1QF.

Magistrates Court – A last and only chance to tour the building (largely unchanged since it was built in 1842) before it becomes a private dwelling. This is a special visit for the Society hosted by the new owner. Date to be arranged.

Boat Trip – In spring we intend to charter the *Boston Belle* for a boat trip into the Wash. The trip will take a good half-day and will cost about £20 per person. It is particularly important to know how many would be interested. It would be a good opportunity for us to get to know each other and talk about our aspirations and ideas.

Peterborough Museum – The museum offers some fascinating guided visits, and we think you may be particularly interested to join us for a presentation there on the history of Peterborough from mediaeval to Tudor and Stuart times.

A START



Above – 1930: Regent Cinema

The Regent Cinema opened in 1927. This fine art-deco building closed in 1959 and was replaced by the Library and the Trustee Savings Bank, later to become a restaurant and then converted into the present Hughes shop. The sheep market was moved to a new site in 1938.

J.H.

THE SOCIETY has been campaigning for some time against the ever-increasing blanking-out of shop windows and its negative effect on the street scene.

It is pleasing therefore to report that **Hughes**, the electrical goods shop in the Sheep Market, have approached the Society to ask how they might improve the look of their black blanked-out window fronting Victoria Street.

After a site meeting it was agreed that the shop layout made it impractical, at present, to re-open the window for the display of goods; so our suggestion was adopted to display three pictures depicting the history of the site their shop now occupies. The manager came up with these three photographs.

The Society very much appreciates Hughes's positive response and hopes other shops will follow this example.

John Honnor

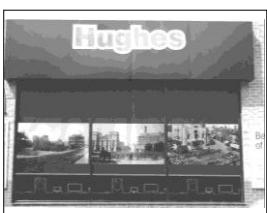
Former Buildings on the Site of Hughes Electrical

Top – 1880: The Prison

The Prison was built in 1826. It occupied the whole block bounded by Victoria Street and Station Street and was surrounded by high brick walls; an imposing deterrent to crime. Demolished in 1890. The Sessions House opposite was built in 1842.

Middle – 1920: The Drill Hall

The Drill Hall was built in 1890 as the head-quarters of F (Spalding) Co. of the 2nd Lincolnshire Volunteer Battalion. It was sold to H.Leverton & Co. in 1909 and converted to a garage and showroom. Demolished 1926.





Sculpture photos: Joseph Hillier

SPALDING'S MARKET ART PROJECT



The Civic Society's market art project sets out to celebrate Spalding's market in its livestock heyday. There would have been a thousand sheep in the Sheepmarket, the jostle and bellowing of cattle in New Road, pigs in Red Lion Street, and a farmyard smell everywhere. Plus the May Hiring Fair (or 'Statutes'), when shepherds, carters, dairymaids and cooks, thatchers and ploughboys poured into the town to offer themselves for hire for another twelve months. Our present market of fruit and veg., seat-pads and padlocks, fish and greetings cards is a very sedate affair by comparison.

Seven years ago the Society launched the idea of a group of public art works for the town centre that would celebrate our market heritage through sculpture, mosaics, etc. But the ambition became a possibility only in 2013 with the arrival of arts organisation Transported and, through them, access to funding from the Arts Council.

Working in partnership, Transported and the Society commissioned sculptor Joseph Hillier for the first work. Taking his cue from the Hiring Fair, Joseph came up with a trail of fourteen small bronzes (*left*) of people nearly all related in some way to the area's present-day food production and processing. The bronzes are not just 'life-like', but are actual local people – from farmer to drainage engineer, vegetable-packer to young blacksmith – immortalised here through a state-of-the-art process of 3D imaging. A second commission will link the present-day figures back to the historic Hiring Fair. Then should follow the beasts and sheep, pigs and poultry.

Transported have been extremely generous in their support and funding. Now it's our turn. This is the Society's first-ever appeal, and we are sure members, and indeed anyone who would like to see the town centre enhanced, will want to contribute in a similar generous spirit.

Yes, I'd like to help the Market Art Project to enhance the centre of Spalding.

£5 [] £10 [] £25 [] £50 [] £100 [] Your choice £ _____

Please make your cheque payable to **Spalding & District Civic Society**, and send to: **Melvyn Price, 34 Avebury Gardens, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2EN.**

Name

Address

Telephone Email

[] Please tick here to receive further information about the Society.



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|---------------------------|--|--|
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