

Trust News



Issue 147 - February 2017

From the Editor

Winter is nearly over and another year has passed with hardly any snow. Let's hope I haven't spoken too soon though. As John Piper said in his book 'Buildings and Prospects', first published in 1948, "When the east wind of March blows day after day Devizes is one of the coldest places in England."

The Trust intends to make this, our golden anniversary, a year to remember. We have already launched a new, updated version of the Town Trail. We have included in the Town Trail an application form for Trust membership which we hope will result in new members.

As part of our Heritage Open Day this year, we will encourage visitors to make the most of our town by following the Town Trail as well as visiting some of our heritage buildings.

The guest speaker at our AGM in March will be the Head of Devizes School and we plan to use his visit as an opportunity to engage with the younger generation. More news at the AGM which will be on Thursday May 16th at the Town Hall. Details are on the back page.

We welcome feedback and contributions from our membership. This year, in particular, it would be wonderful to hear stories of the Trust's activities over the years. We are happy to visit and talk to you if you are reluctant to put pen to paper!

Philippa Morgan

The Trust hits a brick wall

Our attempts to challenge Wiltshire Council's actions come to naught.

Fifty years after the building and then the demolition of the brick wall around the Cranmer led to the birth of the Trust for Devizes, another brick wall, this time a metaphorical one, has stopped the Trust in its challenge of Wiltshire Council's action. Members will recall the article in the November 'Trust News' in which we covered the granting by Wiltshire Council of planning permission for the development of 65 houses off Quakers Walk, apparently in direct contradiction to the Secretary of State's instructions.

Since then, there has been further correspondence between the Trust and the Department of the Communities and Local Government. We have held two meetings with Wiltshire Councillor Laura Mayes. An appointment with Devizes MP Claire Perry unfortunately had to be cancelled due to House of Commons business.

We were hoping that we would be able to get to the bottom of this issue. At the very least, we expected an acknowledgment from the Department that Wiltshire Council had acted incorrectly.

Our hopes were dashed when, on 20th February, we received an email from an official at the Department which stated the following:

"Thank you for your letter of 11 February, in which you ask the Department to consider your letter of 21 November 2016 as a valid challenge to the decision of Wiltshire Council to grant permission for the 65 dwelling scheme.

I am afraid I am not able to assist you in this matter, as that decision would have had to have been challenged by way of a Judicial Review and legal challenges are a matter for the Courts rather than the Secretary of State."

Our letter of 11 February to the official set out the reasons why the Trust did not apply for a Judicial Review. The Wiltshire branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) advised us that the cost of such a Review might be £30,000 or more. We quickly ruled this out on the basis of cost.

In addition, the timescale of the Judicial Review process is very tight – an application must be started within 6 weeks of the planning application being granted – which effectively meant that we had run out of time in which to apply for a Review.

We therefore asked the Department to accept that our letter to them should be taken as a challenge of Wiltshire Council's action. They refused this request, effectively saying that they were not prepared to take action against Wiltshire Council.

The implications of this attitude by the Department are very worrying. They are clearly prepared to stand by while Wiltshire Council ignores their instructions and there is very little that we, the community, can do about it.

The recently issued White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' states that:

"For local communities, the Government is offering a simpler and clearer planning process that makes it easier for them to get involved and shape plans for their area."

But if communities do not have a way of challenging the planning process without going through the complicated and expensive Judicial Review system, why should they spend time and effort getting involved in developing neighbourhood plans? Maybe it's time to fix the broken planning system?

"Our Housing White Paper is a critical step along the road to make Britain a country that works for everyone"

Sajid Javid
Communities Secretary



The Drewe Family

Set in the south wall of St James' Church is a well-worn stone, obviously older than the present building and, in all probability rescued from the original 15th Century chapel. The inscription is hardly legible, but one can make out "in memory of Robert and Elizabeth Drewe" and the year 1691. The Drewe's (often spelled without the e) were important people and the fate of one of them, is to say the least, unfortunate.

This branch of the Drewe family moved from Devon to Devizes in the first half of the 15th Century. They were clothiers. Devizes had a well-established cloth manufacturing business, particularly for white broadcloth and it is possible that this particular Drewe recognised a business opportunity. There were other Drews living in Wiltshire, (Littleton Drew is named after them), and these may well have been relatives. The business prospered and in 1501 a John Drewe purchased the Southbroom Estate and built Southbroom House - the site of the house is now integrated into Devizes School. It is not clear how big the estate was but, since there is reference to a pond, it may well have stretched as far as that pond now known as Drew's.

In the 17th century there were two Robert Drewes, father and son. The second is commemorated on the plaque, but apart from the name of his wife and the date of his baptism and death little is known, but his father is fully documented. He was baptised at St James' in 1575, educated at Oxford and practiced law in the Middle Temple. He was busy in Devizes too: a burgess at 22 and a magistrate and one of Devizes' two MPs by the age of 24. He had extensive property interests and managed a number of estates locally including that of the Nicholas family and at one time was listed as the Lord of Poushot Manor.

The Civil War broke out in 1642 and Robert sided with the King, as did the town. This was to be his undoing, for in January 1645 retribution came when Southbroom House was burned on the orders of the parliamentary governor of Gloucester. It is believed that Drewe died in the conflagration. He was buried on 24 January at St James'. All that was left standing for the son to inherit was the dovecote!

In 1680 Southbroom Estate was sold and with the death of Robert junior the Drewe era came to a close.

Tony Sedgwick

A Trip To The Past

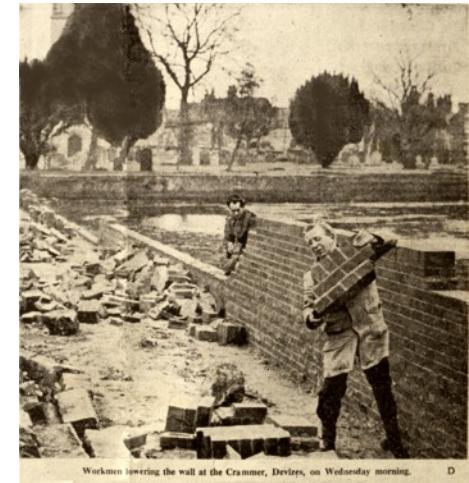
Philippa Morgan recounts a visit to the Wiltshire Archives

CRAMMER POND WALL AN 'ERROR OF JUDGMENT'

A DEVIZES town councillor agreed last night that the five-foot wall at the edge of the Crammer pond was "obviously an error of judgment."



Waiting to present their petition to the Mayor of Devizes are (left to right), Mr F. W. C. Merritt, Mrs E. May (organiser of the petition), Mrs C. A. Varian and Mr A. Etheridge.



Workmen lowering the wall at the Crammer, Devizes, on Wednesday morning. D

Where it all began... The Trust's first successful campaign.

I recently visited the Wiltshire Archive Centre to research the history of the Trust. I thought that I would share some of my findings.

The Record Office has a catalogue of Trust for Devizes material from 1969 through to 2003. Minutes from 1983 -2001, newsletters from 1969 - 1991, press cuttings from 1967 - 1998 are all available in the archives to look at on request. There are also individual files on notable projects such as flower beds in Albion Place, the Assize Courts, the Shambles Clock, Spitalcroft allotments, St John's Alley and the blue plaques.

In 1967, shortly after it was founded, the Trust was asked to consider the acquisition and restoration of the Old Town Hall. This was not possible due to the Trust being very young. It should be noted that the Borough Council had expressed an interest in buying it but had found the price too high.

In 1969, the Trust donated £150 towards the restoration of the Fountain in the Market Place. In the same year, the Trust objected to the introduction of parking meters on the basis that "the disc parking scheme is extremely efficient and succeeds in doing exactly what it sets out to do".

The visual aspect of parking meters was also seen as a problem "The siting of two or three hundred meters throughout the centre of the historic town would be ruinous. We already have a surfeit of signs, lamp posts and parking notices and any more would be disastrous."

In 1971, there was a proposal that Shane's Castle should be demolished

although it was included as a Grade II listed building in that year. In 1972 there was concern about the overgrown condition of Quakers Walk.

There was talk of a by pass in 1973 but there was not felt to be a sufficient economic rate of return for it to be included in Department of the Environment's urban schemes preparation pool.

The first edition of the Town Trail was launched in 1975. On Nov 21st 1975, the Trust offered its services to prevent further deterioration of St Johns Alley.

1978 was a year of demolition. 14 and 15 Monday Market Street were demolished due to unsafe structure. 21, 22 & 23 The Brittox were recommended for demolition. 33-35 New Park St was also demolished due to its deteriorated condition.

In 1986, on the subject of a proposed amusement arcade, the Trust said "we would not object to an amusement arcade being set up in a suitable area in the town (say in New Park St when Police supervision is easily available) as some of us feel such a facility might lessen the amount of vandalism by young people in the town, which to a large extent, arises out of boredom with no interests available for that particular element. Indeed, in Melksham, where such an arcade exists, we are informed that the level of vandalism is less than it is in Devizes."

If you have any memories of the Trust's involvement in Devizes, we would love to hear from you.

Devizes' History On The Web

A few sites of interest

If you are new to Devizes or even if you were born in the town, its history is all around you but some of it is hidden. Below are various websites which are worth checking up to find out more about different aspects of Devizes' history.

Devizes Castle

www.gatehouse-gazetteer.info/English%20sites/3627.html

This website covers the story of Devizes castle from its origin in 1080 to the current Neo Norman/Gothic castle and gatehouse.

Devizes to Westminster canoe race

www.dwrace.org.uk/racehistory.html

This website explains how the canoe race came into being in 1948 and the history of the event, which is still run at Easter each year.

Devizes Bowls Club

As Devizes Bowls Club approaches its centenary, find out more about its history here:

www.devizesbowls.com/about-history

The Old Devizes White Horse, or the Snobs' Horse



Pic courtesy White Horse Walking Holidays

The Devizes white horse was cut for the millennium, but did you know that Devizes once had another white horse which is no longer visible. The old horse was on the edge of Roundway Down, north of Devizes, just below the hillfort called Oliver's Castle, about a mile from the site of the new horse. It was very well situated on a good steep slope high above a valley, and will have been easily visible from many miles away.

The horse was cut during Whitsun 1845 by the local shoemakers, and was known as the Snobs' Horse, "snob" being a dialect word for shoemaker.

Sadly, the white horse was neglected. Turf soon encroached on it and covered it and by the end of the nineteenth century it was no longer

visible, although sometimes the outline of the horse could still be made out in some conditions in the 20th century.

There were a number of proposals to restore or re-create the horse, but none of them came to fruition. The current white horse (*pictured above, on its 10th birthday in 2010*) was cut using a plan of the old horse, but reversed so that the new horse faces to the right rather than the left.

You can see the location of the Snobs' horse if you visit www.gridreferencefinder.com/ and type in Grid reference SU 000 645.

This and information about other White Horses can be found here:

www.wiltshirewhitehorses.org.uk/devizesold.html

Museum News

A selection of forthcoming events

LECTURE: Tunnel Under Devizes

2:30 pm, Saturday, 4 March

A talk by John Girvan with Project Engineer Graham Vanstone. Find out about the sewer tunnel under Devizes including footage of the 'Mole' excavating a new tunnel in 1988.

£6.50 (£4 WANHS members)

FUNDRAISING LECTURE: Sir David Hempleman-Adams

7:30 pm, Friday, 7 April

We are delighted to confirm that explorer Sir David Hempleman-Adams, the present High Sheriff of Wiltshire, will be speaking at the Town Hall, Devizes about some of his life's experiences.

Sir David is one of the most experienced and successful adventurers in the world. He was Expedition Leader for the Polar Ocean Challenge 2016, a circumnavigation of the North Pole in one Summer Season, transiting the North-East & North-West Passages. The expedition aimed to cast a spotlight on climate change in the sea ice landscape of the Arctic.

£15 (£13 WANHS members)

MUSEUM TOUR / STONEHENGE WALK

10 am, Friday 21 April

A tour of the Museum in the morning, followed by a light lunch then a walk in the Stonehenge Ceremonial Landscape with Director, David Dawson.

£40 (£35 WANHS members)

SPRING SOCIAL

10:30 am - 1pm, Saturday 22nd April

Hot drinks and delicious cake for sale with a table-top stall.

LECTURE: THE ECOLOGY OF SALISBURY PLAIN, by Tony Rowlands

2:30 pm, Saturday 22nd April

Tony led the walk last summer to the part of the Plain which is permanently closed to the public. There will be another walk in July.

£6.50 (£4 WANHS members)

Bookings and enquiries:
www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk

Or call 01380 727369

You can now search the
Museum's Collections
database online

www.wiltshireheritagecollections.org.uk

Where Have All The Tailors Gone?

A reflection by Tony Duck

Once upon a time, Devizes had a plethora of men's outfitters, enough to suit every taste, every need and every budget. Now the choice is very limited, especially for those of a certain age. From the 1950's through to the 1980's everyone was catered for and, in those days, an outfitter meant what it said, supplying all a man's needs from outerwear through to shirts, ties and underwear but not shoes.

At the top of Sidmouth Street there were the, now demolished, premises of Giles & Gillette who specialised in country wear: tweeds, hacking jackets, jodhpurs and the like, plus farmers' work clothes. On the opposite side of the street was Harry Ellen with Sunday best for the respectable working man and dungarees and other tradesmen's apparel.

The real mecca was The Brittox. On the junction with Maryport Street, was Marlow Sloper, not to be confused with Charles Sloper and Son, the department store on the opposite side of the road, which did not sell menswear.

Further down was the town's only bespoke tailor, run by Mr. & Mrs. Craft. He measured, created paper patterns and cut the material, she supervised the hand sewing of each garment. This was real luxury.

There were two multiple tailors, Hepworths and Burtons, who made garments of good quality at an economy price. Fosters was another multiple store aimed at the lower end of the market.

Robert Kemp & Son had a high end business on three floors which sold custom tailored garments as well as school uniform for both boys and girls.

Mackenzies catered for a younger market, specialising in casual wear, mostly imported from Italy.

Finally, on the corner of Wine Street and High Street was Claphams, which served roughly the same market as Giles & Gillett.

Sadly, over the years all these firms have closed and now gentlemen of Devizes must look further afield for their outfits.

Tony Duck

A date for your diary

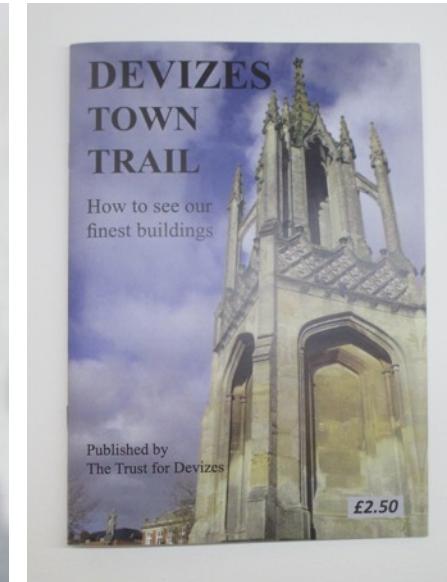
This year's AGM will be held at Devizes Town Hall on Thursday 16th March, 7pm for a prompt start at 7:30pm.

After business is over, we will welcome as our speaker Phil Bevan, Headteacher at Devizes School. His theme will be "The Role of the School in the Community".

Light refreshments will be provided. All are welcome but non-members will not be able to vote.

"Town Trail" updated

A new edition of a popular publication



A collection of previous editions... and the latest addition!

To mark the Trust for Devizes' 50th anniversary, the Devizes Town Trail has been revised and updated. The seventh edition of the Trail has all new colour photographs and the trail has been extended to include Bridewell Street. The street plan has also been revised and improved.

The original Trail was published in 1975 to mark European Architectural Heritage Year. The idea was first suggested by John Girvan, who developed the Trail with help from fellow committee member Frank

Scrivener. Some of the original text was provided by Wiltshire County Council, with revisions by Richard Sandell at the Museum.

Early editions featured a line drawing of the Market Cross by G A Renvoize. The new edition features a striking photograph of the Cross, taken by John Girvan.

Copies are now available from Devizes Books, Wiltshire Museum, Ducks of Devizes, Brittox News and WH Smith, price £2.50, or by mail order from the Trust (please add 50p p&p).

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www.trustfordevizes.info