

From the Editor

We're nearly half way through 2017 and what a year it's been so far. Everything seems to be up in the air – the Assize Courts and the possibility of the Museum moving there; the development of the Wharf; the viability of the Neighbourhood Plan and its impact on future housing development; and, last but not least, will there be a May Fair in 2018?

The future of St Mary's Church is also uncertain and you have a chance to contribute to the discussion (see Page 2). We know that this is not a new problem because, in August 1945, the then Rector of St. John and St. Mary, having just returned from his wartime army service, wrote in his parish magazine: "What is to be done about St. Mary's is a question I am constantly being asked, and one which is causing me considerable concern, but I must meet the PCC and talk things over before I can venture any suggestions."

Also on page 2, is a summary of this year's Trust AGM which took place in March. Our speaker at the AGM was Phil Bevan, Head of Devizes School. We are very keen to get involved with the School and we have agreed with them that the Trust will fund a prize for an essay competition. This is part of our 50th birthday celebration and, hopefully, will encourage younger people in our community to support and join the Trust. Our aim is to ensure that the Trust can continue its good work and that there will be a centenary celebration in 2067!

More generally, we do need to recruit more members so that we can demonstrate to decision makers that we represent the community as a whole. Anything that you can do to encourage friends and family to join us would be most welcome. Inez Skinner, our Membership Secretary, would be delighted to hear from them.

Philippa Morgan

Trust and Devizes School Working Together

An exciting initiative

Following Devizes School's Headmaster Phil Bevan's attendance at the Trust's AGM, we are now working with the School to set up a competition with an annual prize of £50 for the two best essays written by pupils on a subject related to the physical and social structure of Devizes.

Teachers at the School have been involved in deciding the best way for the competition to be organised. As a result, it has been agreed that the competition should be delivered through the English Department. It will be aimed at Years 7 to 9 (in old money, the first, second and third years in secondary school). The pupils are in the National Curriculum Key Stage 3.

The National Curriculum for English requires that pupils should (amongst others):

- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language;
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage;
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences; and
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas

The quality of writing at the School in Key Stage 3 is considered to be very high

and we hope that this competition will offer an outlet for creative writing.

This year's subject for the competition will be 'What would Jane Austen think about Devizes if she came here today?' The subject will change annually by agreement between the School and the Trust. Judging will be by representatives of the School and the Trust. The Result will be agreed in time for the end of the Summer Term when an announcement and presentation will be made, hopefully involving parents. We will review the success of the project with the School and introduce any changes as a result.

Your Trustees are very excited about this project and we hope that it will raise awareness of the Trust within the School and with parents as well as contributing to the overall quality of education at the School. If you have any ideas for future subjects, please let us know.



A 21st century Jane Austen?

Corrections

In our last issue, Tony Duck lamented the lack of gents' outfitters in Devizes. In his account of the outfitters of the past, he referred to one establishment as "Marlow" Sloper, when it should have been Marler Sloper. Marler Sloper was Mayor of Devizes in 1924.

It has also been pointed out to us that since November 2016, Fox In The House, in the Market Place, has been selling and hiring a wide range of quality menswear.

We are happy to set the record straight, and apologise for our mistakes.



More than two years after a planning inspector turned down plans for it to become a performance space, the question of what will become of St Mary's Church, Devizes is again being asked.

Wiltshire Council has asked the parochial church council of St John with St Mary to carry out a new assessment to help identify the best use of the building and one which would cause it the least harm.

A draft consultation management plan has been drawn up for discussion. The draft plan contains background information explaining the history of the church and how it might be preserved. It acknowledges that the church is effectively redundant as it used very little for worship. If it is not possible to identify a new use that is sustainable in the long term, the parish may have to apply for it to be made redundant.

At the moment the lack of toilets and an adequate kitchen are major drawbacks to any new proposals so any new plan would have to incorporate these facilities. There are already problems with vandalism and litter in the graveyard and there is concern that this will get worse if the church continues to remain empty.

Any use proposed by the parish must also be acceptable to Wiltshire Council, Historic England, the Salisbury Diocese and be in the best interests of the building and of the town.

The Parish Council is keen that people in the town should have a say on the future of the church and says it will listen to any ideas that will not cause harm to character and significance of the building.

There is more information here
www.tinyurl.com/StMarysDevizes

You can also contact Tony Scorer for more information at:

tonyscorer@yahoo.com

The Annual General Meeting of The Trust for Devizes was held in The Assembly Rooms, The Town Hall, Devizes at 7.30p.m. on Thursday, 16th March 2017. Ian Sharp chaired the meeting.

There were thirty-one members present and apologies were received from twenty-one members.

The Honorary Treasurer, James Flood, explained that the Trust would have extra expenses in 2018. A new edition of the Town Trail had just been published, the cost of which would have to be met up front although that cost would be recovered, with profit, as sales were generated. The Trust had also commissioned the Town Council to clean and refurbish the street nameplates throughout the centre of the town up to a cost of £1,600. He therefore proposed that: "The membership fee should rise to £15 per household immediately for new members but that the increase should not apply to existing members until January 1st 2018." The proposal was unanimously approved.

The acting Chairman explained the present system of having a rotating chairman and that this was working satisfactorily, nonetheless he invited nominations from the floor: none were forthcoming.

The following were elected:

Hon. Treasurer: Dr. James Flood

Hon. Secretary: Tony Duck

Trustees: The Chairman drew attention to the resignation during the year of John Baumber and David Dawson, due to a potential conflict of interest. They were thanked for the valuable contribution which each had made to the Trust in the past. The existing board of Trustees had all indicated their willingness to stand again. They were:

Peter Allfrey; John Girvan; Revd. John Hawthorne; Philippa Morgan; Richard Ormerod; Ian Sharp; Inez Skinner.

The Chairman then introduced the speaker, Mr. Phil. Bevan, Headmaster, Devizes School.

Mr. Bevan, who was born and educated in Marlborough, gave a brief outline of his career: firstly in the music industry, then in voluntary youth work leading to his return to university to take a degree in teaching. He then taught in various schools, his last previous appointment being as Headteacher at a Bristol school. A year ago he came to Devizes School, a happy return to his home county.

The School has a policy of encouraging visitors, not only from the community and parents, but students from the contributory schools so that the transition from relatively small schools to the senior school is easier for them. He went on to enumerate some of the activities of the last few days which had included: a Dance Festival involving 175 six to seven year olds; it being National Science Week there had been a demonstration for 150 nine and ten year old. The School had also taken part in the BBC Young Reporters competition and their entry had been filmed for Points West.

The School has also joined the multi-academy White Horse Federation which gives extra tuition to two hundred and fifty gifted students. Local organisations, both civic and voluntary are now encouraged to come to the school and pupils are equally encouraged to participate in their activities. Overall the members present gained a better knowledge of the school and its now more open ethos.

Dr. Flood closed the proceedings by thanking Mr. Bevan for his presentation.

The White Bear

Has a new hanging sign!

We are delighted that the hanging sign outside the White Bear pub has now been repainted and re-hung. The pub has recently celebrated its 450th anniversary so it was fitting that the sign was smartened up as part of the celebrations.



The Story of a Map



The 1817 OS map of Wiltshire

A few weeks ago, I was given a very special gift by a neighbour and Trust member. As she gave it to me, she said 'I think you'll like this'. She was correct! I opened the green leather sleeve and found that the contents were an original Ordnance Survey map of Devizes.

I spread out the map on the dining table and found the following pieces of information:

Top left - Price Seven Shillings

Top right - No XIV

Bottom left - Published 14th Aug 1817, Col Mudge, Tower.

Bottom right - Engraved at the Drawing Room in the Tower, under the Direction of Col Mudge by Benj Baker & Assistants. The writing by Eben Bourne.

Some research was called for and here is what I discovered.

Col Mudge was William Mudge (1762–1820) an English artillery officer and surveyor, born in Plymouth, and an important figure in the work of the Ordnance Survey.

In 1801, the first one-inch-to-the-mile (1:63,360 scale) map was published, detailing the county of Kent, with Essex following shortly afterwards. During the next twenty years, roughly a third of England and Wales was mapped at the same scale under the direction of William Mudge. By 1810, one inch to the mile maps of most of the south of England were completed, but they were withdrawn from sale between 1811 and 1816 because of security fears.

After a fire in the Tower (of London), the Ordnance Survey moved to Southampton where it is still based.

It is to Mudge that William Wordsworth alludes in his poem *Written with a Slate Pencil on a Stone, on the Side of the Mountain of Black Combe*, written in 1811-1813; Wordsworth had heard in Bootle from the Rev. James Satterthwaite the story of the surveyor (identified with Mudge) on top of Black Combe, famous for its long-distance views inland and out to sea, who was not able to see even the map in front of him when fog or darkness closed in.

You can read the poem here and develop a respect for William Mudge, as I have. No digital mapping then!

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Written_with_a_Slate_pencil,_on_a_Stone,_on_the_Side_of_the_Mountain_of_Black_Combe

Sadly, I could find no information about Benj Baker and Eben Bourne.



A close-up, Showing Devizes and district

Museum News

A selection of forthcoming events

LECTURE SERIES: Sources for Local and Family Historians

2:00 pm, Saturday, 03 June, 2017

The last of a series of workshops by Stuart A Raymond. The subject is 'Justices of the Peace and Quarter Sessions: Records of County Governance'. Cost per workshop £12 non-members (£10 WANHS members). Booking essential.

LECTURE & BOOK LAUNCH: The Making of Prehistoric Wiltshire

7:30 pm, Thursday, 15 June, 2017

Lecture and book launch with David Field, David McOmish and Steve Speller. Cost £8.00 (£5 WANHS members). Booking essential.

WALK: Bratton Castle & Westbury White Horse landscape

6:30 pm, Tuesday, 20 June, 2017

A 3.25 mile (2 - 2.5 hour) walk led by Isobel Geddes (along footpaths, tracks & lanes) around Bratton Castle, the hill-fort above Westbury white horse, including the springs by Bratton Church (steep hill). There are spectacular views from the chalk escarpment over the Avon & Biss valleys to the Cotswolds and Mendips. Cost £10 (£8 WANHS members). Booking essential.

WALK: East Knoyle and Windmill Hill

2:00 pm, Saturday, 19 August, 2017

A 4 mile (3 hour) walk led by Isobel Geddes (along footpaths, tracks & lanes) looking at geology, landscape and building stones. The varied geology with steeply dipping rocks makes the terrain hilly but there is a spectacular view over the Stour valley. Cost £10 (£8 WANHS members). Booking essential.

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

9:30 am, Saturday, 28 October, 2017

The Biennial Industrial Archaeology Symposium with talks on a variety of topics. Final programme of speakers to be confirmed shortly. Cost: £14 (£12 WANHS members). Booking essential.

Bookings and enquiries:
www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk

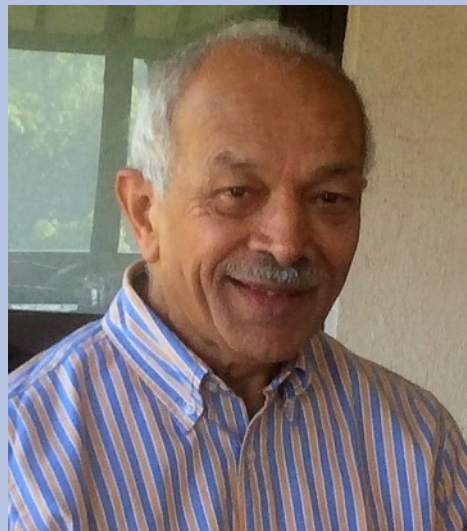
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database online

www.wiltshireheritagecollections.org.uk

An old friend of Devizes

*A chance encounter in India re-
vives memories*



Roz Ambler writes:

Here is picture of Dr K Jayaram He worked at Roundway Hospital for 18 months from late 1966, in his first junior doctor post as a psychiatrist.

He has happy memories, although when he first arrived, food was a bit of a problem. When told he was a vegetarian, the hospital canteen cooked him cabbage with curry powder and a few raisins!

Happily his new wife joined him fairly soon, and they set up home in a very comfortable, well heated mobile home that the hospital bought to house them, as they did not have married quarters there.

His wife caused a bit of a stir going round Devizes in her colourful saris, and she also helped in the Occupational Therapy department.

He then worked in other British psychiatric hospitals, before moving to Canada 45 years ago.

He returns to his home city of Bangalore most winters, and was on a trip into the coffee growing area of Karnataka when he met us.

He would love to know if anyone remembers him from his 18 months here.

Dates for your diary

The planned Open Meeting on 'The Housing Debate' which was due to take place on Thursday 29th June has now been postponed because of the General Election earlier in the month. It has been impossible to organise and plan the meeting in the circumstances.

This year's Heritage Open Day will be on Saturday 9th September.

What's in a name? Bridewell Street



The Grange in Bridewell Street

In 1553 the former royal palace of Bridewell located near London's Fleet Street was converted into a prison to house "the disorderly poor and homeless children of the City of London". It was the first prison that adopted a positive attitude to both children and prisoners. Children could be apprenticed, giving them every opportunity to follow a trade while the prisoners' incarceration was considered as an opportunity to ensure they did not become repeat offenders rather than leaving them to rot.

It is not surprising then that it became a model for a number of prisons around the country. The Devizes Bridewell was built in 1579, the fourth to be built in the provinces after Oxford, Salisbury and Norwich. It was

not only the principles of the London Bridewell that were copied but also the name "Bridewell".

Our Bridewell has had a chequered history - two fires, in 1619 and 1630, and re-fronted in brick in 1771. When Devizes Gaol was opened in 1817, the Bridewell was initially used for detaining pre-trial prisoners. It later served as a police station. By 1881 it had become a ladies school and shortly after that a home for "needy old women". In 1979 it was converted by the Devizes Almshouse Trust into self-contained flats.

Quite when the name of the street was changed is uncertain. But the Bridewell (now called The Grange) remains as proof that historic buildings can be adapted to meet the needs of the day.

Tony Segdwick

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The Trust is a Registered Charity No 259653



www.trustfordevizes.info