

From the Editor

It has been a busy three months since our last issue. Wiltshire Council seems to be consulting on just about everything – parking, leisure, open spaces and changes to kerbside garden waste collection. There is also a proposal to make improvements to the Shambles which was on the agenda of our July committee meetings.

We are in the final stages of the Strategic Plan and the Devizes neighbourhood plan. There have been two appeals against planning refusals. As well as the appeal concerning St Mary's which features on the front page, we are still awaiting the decision by the Secretary of State on the Coate Bridge development. This has been delayed and is now expected on September 8th. And that's before we include the Devizes Festival, International Street Festival and Carnival.

Coming up we have the second Devizes Heritage Open Day, bigger than 2013. We will be pursuing with our Wiltshire Councillors what can be done about the poor level of street cleaning which many people will have noticed recently. We will continue to press for something to be done about the deteriorating state of the Assize Courts – we live in hope!

The Trust has now been without a Chairman for nearly six months following Ted East's resignation at the AGM on March 23rd. We are following a system of rotating the role of Chairman for our monthly meetings and continuing to make progress on issues such as parking as can be seen elsewhere in this edition. We are still involved in planning matters and other issues within our objectives. So, why do we need a Chairman? Your Committee recognises that, like most organisations, we need someone to give leadership and strategic direction. We are continuing to look for a replacement Chairman. Members are of course welcome to apply.

Philippa Morgan

St. Mary's Planning Appeal

*An impressive turnout and broad community support fails to sway the inspector
Tony Duck reports.*



Picture: Philippa Morgan

The planning application for the development of St Mary's church, rejected in late 2013 (see Trust News 134), has reached the appeal stage.

Despite the hearing being moved from The Corn Exchange to County Hall in Trowbridge, there was still a large number of supporters present. The committee room was filled to capacity, necessitating the steady importation of extra chairs, as more and more people arrived.

Amongst the reasons given for the move was the lack of photocopying facilities in the Wessex Rooms. This proved justified as the Inspector, surprised by the size of his audience, immediately ordered a further supply of copies of the agenda, as the dozen he had brought were clearly insufficient. Another reason for moving was the lack of public address system. Although there was one there; it did not work!

The St. Mary's Trust fielded a strong team led by the Rector, Canon Paul Richardson and project manager Tony Scorer with their professional advisers; a model of the scheme had also been produced.

Their case was supported by letters from The Bishop of Salisbury and Devizes M.P. Claire Perry. Devizes Town Council, represented by Cllr. Mrs Judy Rose, ward

representative Cllr. Nigel Carter and The Trust for Devizes' Honorary Secretary, Tony Duck also made supportive submissions. The latter three concentrated on the very real community benefits which could be achieved were the plans to be realised.

The discussion was very technical, centring on the interpretation of various planning policies and the weight which should be given to them. Basically the argument ran: does the perceived harm done to the setting and structure of this Grade 1* Listed Building outweigh the benefits of giving it a 21st century use which will ensure that it regains a central place in the community and the continued maintenance of its fabric?

The lay audience, possibly slightly biased, felt that the St. Mary's team had the best of the exchanges and left for the site meeting with a feeling of cautious optimism.

As we now know, that optimism was not justified. However, a careful reading of the judgement shows that all may not be lost and that a solution can be achieved.

St. Mary's Trust is determined not to give up and will, I am sure continue to receive the support of the town and of The Trust. With a degree of concord on both sides a sympathetic compromise can be reached.

Our twin town

Dec McSweeney asks: why?

During a recent trip to northern France we had an opportunity to visit Mayenne, one of Devizes' "twin towns".

It's a pleasant town, situated on the Mayenne River. We walked along the "Quai Devizes"; visited the town's museum, housed in an 11th century castle; and followed a "historic trail" around the town centre.

We asked ourselves how and why the town came to be twinned with Devizes; it is no more like our town than others in the area, and in many ways it is quite different. One of life's little mysteries....

As we walked at random through the streets, we came upon a grand building in a very sad state of repair. Fenced off, with boarded-up windows and weeds growing through cracks in the stonework, it was a miserable sight.

We popped into the tourist information office and discovered that this once fine building was no longer used, and had been sold for one Euro to a developer. He has neglected it for years, letting the site fall into a tragic condition.

In its glory days, it had been *Le Tribunal* - the local court building.

Mystery solved!



A sight that will strike a chord with the people of Devizes.

What's in a name?

Tony Sedgwick reflects on his association with Alan Cobham



The first generation of in-flight refuelling. This picture was taken shortly after Alan Cobham's company was formed in 1934

I was fascinated to learn that one of our new roads had been named after my old boss, Alan Cobham, or to give him due respect Sir Alan Cobham, KBE.

I wonder how many residents of Alan Cobham Road know anything about the man their road is named after. When I say he was my boss, he was Chairman of Flight Refuelling Ltd where I worked as an engineer. Both he and I were accustomed to be in the office on Saturday mornings and it was common for Sir Alan to wander round chatting to his employees.

Flight Refuelling were world leaders in refuelling aircraft in flight, not just in flight but at high speed and high altitude. In my day over a thousand people worked for the company and it employed all sorts of clever technology to achieve its aim.

I also knew something about Sir Alan and his days as a pioneered aviator: a World War I fighter ace, he

specialised in making and breaking records. Later he started what became known as "Cobham's Flying Circus" which put on air displays and gave thousands of people their first taste of flying. I know because my mother was one of them!

It was during our conversation one Saturday that Sir Alan said to me "Do you know how I got into this business?" He then went on to tell me this story.

He was attempting a long-distance flying record and considering the problem of maximum fuel load. He realised that the problem was taking off with a full load, not flying once you were "up". So, ever a resourceful man, he persuaded a fellow flyer to take up some jerry cans of fuel and lower them down to him on a rope. "I stood up in the cockpit and poured the fuel into the tank" he told me. That was the first ever in-flight refuelling and it was typical of this superbly inventive man - I count myself fortunate to have known him.

Subscriptions Are you up to date?

Members who have not yet paid their subscriptions for 2014 will find a letter from our Treasurer enclosed with their copy of Trust News.

One way of ensuring that you will not be late in 2015 is to set up a standing order. Or you can make a one off BACS payment of £12 to Sort Code 40-19-16 for the credit of the Trust for Devizes Account No. 80292397. Please include your name in the reference box.

The Great Parking Debate

Tony Sedgwick, traffic Advisor to the trust, summarises the outcome of our June meeting and makes some recommendations.

Any debate on parking is guaranteed to generate strong views and a significant amount of hot air! So, when Wiltshire Council decided to consult on the future of parking in the County they must have expected a larger and more robust response than usual.

The Trust decided to get involved early and held "The Great Parking Debate", asking our members what they would like to see change in parking strategy. The following issues were highlighted and generally agreed upon.

1. Payment method

There was an overwhelming view that Pay and Display was unsuitable for a town which relied heavily on tourists and visitors. There was evidence that visitors curtailed their visit to the Museum because of the fear of being issued with a PCN. Retailers also felt strongly that Pay on Foot would result in increased spending in the town.

2. Market Place

Whilst there were conflicting views as to whether parking should be removed from the Market Place if it is to remain there was a strong preference for the time limit to be extended to one hour.

3. Residents' Parking

The meeting was unanimous in supporting the introduction of Residents' Parking Schemes to prevent all day parking by commuters in residential streets. There was a view that short term parking should be allowed in resident zones.

4. Commuter Parking

Some participants wanted to see cheaper parking for commuters in Car Parks. Others felt that the Council needed to publicize the large discount available for annual season tickets. It was agreed that there should be a reduction in the number of free unrestricted on-street parking spaces.

5. Charges

Whilst no-one suggested parking charges should be reduced, there was considerable criticism of a fee structure which resulted in frequent overpayments. The meeting recommended that in future the tariffs should be such as make exact payment much easier.

Phone parking was clearly unpopular, particularly with the surcharge.

6. Enforcement

The lack of visible enforcement was criticized by many of the participants. It was felt that disabled bays in particular were being abused. The view of the meeting was that enforcement was lax and should be sharpened up.

7. Station Road

The meeting was concerned at the lack of use of Station Road Car Park and felt that

efforts should be made to increase the number of commuters parking there. Whilst the use of part as a short term car park was seen as sensible, concerns were expressed about the practicality of having a short term car park at the bottom of a steep hill.

Prior to the day of the debate, I carried out a detailed analysis of parking demand which was summarized at the start of the debate. It contained some interesting facts which are worth repeating here:-

- a) There is no shortage of parking spaces in the town, even on Market Day. Station Road always has spaces.
- b) The 30 minute limit in the Market Place has resulted in around 700 vehicles a day parking there. That has taken a lot of strain off the on-street parking.
- c) A number of car parks are grossly under-used.
- d) Only sixty-four commuters park regularly in Council Car Parks. Much of the congestion on residential roads is caused by commuters parking all day for free!

We need to have a clearly defined strategy for parking. From that we can determine what actions need to be taken to meet that strategy. I would suggest that the strategy should major on the following: -

- I. Priority should be given to shoppers and tourists. That means ensuring there are available spaces and that the parking experience is pleasant. In this context, Pay on Foot where you do not have to decide how long you are going to stay is preferable to the punitive nature of Pay & Display.
- II. Whilst adequate provision should be made for those who work in the town, the need to reduce peak-hour congestion by inducing more people to use public transport or bicycle means that, at the very least, those parking all day should pay a fee such as to create a level playing field with public transport.
- III. On-street parking can decrease road safety and make congestion worse by narrowing the highway. It should be used to make up for any shortfall in off-street provision, not as the motorists first choice, as it is today
- IV. Residents should not have to fight to park near their homes.
- V. Enforcement should be high profile: people need to be reminded that breaking the rules can be expensive!

These are the issues as I see them. As the debate goes on we will keep you informed.

A report of the debate, plus copies of the presentations which were made at the meeting, is available on our website at www.trustfordevizes.info/Parking.html

Museum News

A selection of forthcoming events

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 7th - 2.30pm HERITAGE WALK with John Girvan. Adults £5.50, Children £3.50. **BOOKING RECOMMENDED.**

Saturday 13th DEVIZES HERITAGE OPEN DAY - see enclosed leaflet

EXHIBITION: Why We Went to War: Devizes in the Great War Opens 14th September to late January 2015

Sunday 14th - 2.30pm DEVIZES AT WAR, a tour of the town led by John Girvan. Adults £5.00, Children £3.00. **BOOKING RECOMMENDED.**

Saturday 20th from 10.30am Walking the Dead: Exploring the Stonehenge Ceremonial Landscape. A guided tour of the amazing collections of the Wiltshire Museum, followed by a guided walk from Durrington Walls to Stonehenge. Led by Museum Director, David Dawson. £40 **BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

OCTOBER

Saturday 4th - meet 10.45 am OWN CAR OUTING: Littlecote House. A guided tour of the house, which is now owned by Warner Leisure. £10 (£8 WANHS members)

Commencing Wednesday 8th EVENING LECTURE SERIES: The Archaeology of Mass Destruction - An Investigation into the Cold War and its legacy, by Bob Clarke. Six evening lectures plus one field trip. £75 (£50 WANHS members) **BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

Saturday 25th at 2:30 WANHS AGM, Devizes Town Hall. Followed by a **PRESENTATION - The Lacock Cup**, by Lloyd Debeer, Curator of Later Medieval Collections at the British Museum. WANHS members FREE, non-members £6. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

NOVEMBER

Sunday 2nd - WWI Family activity day

Thursday 6th - 7.30pm FILM SHOW: Letters from a Small Town Showing as part of the Great War exhibition, with an introduction by Richard Broadhead. £5 (film lasts approx. 1 hour)

Saturday 15th - 10.15am - 12.15pm FUNDRAISING COFFEE MORNING Join us to make and meet friends, and raise money for the museum.

Thursday 13th - 7.30pm FILM SHOW: BFI Showing as part of the Great War exhibition, with an introduction by Richard Broadhead. £5 (film lasts approx. 1 hour)

Continued overleaf

NOVEMBER *continued*

Saturday 15th - 2.30pm LECTURE - *Star Carr: Life in Britain after the Ice Age*, by Tim Schadla-Hall. £6 (£3.50 WANHS members). BOOKING RECOMMENDED

Sunday 16th - noon to 4pm GREAT WAR ARTEFACT IDENTIFICATION DAY
Bring along items for identification, by experts Richard Broadhead, David Carson and Dan Miles.

Thursday 20th to Saturday 22nd GREAT WAR BATTLEFIELD GUIDED TOUR

A three-day guided minibus tour of the Great War battlefields of Flanders and the Somme with author and historian Richard Broadhead. A wreath will be laid during the Last Post ceremony at Ypres in memory of all members of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society who fell during the Great War. Price TBA BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Bookings and enquiries:
www.wiltshireheritage.org.uk

Or call 01380 727369

Are you online?

Would you prefer to receive your Trust News by email?

Printing and posting the Trust News is one of the major costs incurred by the Trust.

If you would be happy to receive your copy of Trust News by email, it would help to reduce our outgoings, saving paper as well as the time spent by our volunteers stuffing envelopes!

To register for this service, please send an email to

info@trustfordevizes.info.

Dates for your diary

The Devizes Community Campus

Friday 10th October at 7:30 pm
at the Town Hall

This will be a chance to find out more about the proposals and give everyone an opportunity to contribute to the Campus Development Team's thinking.

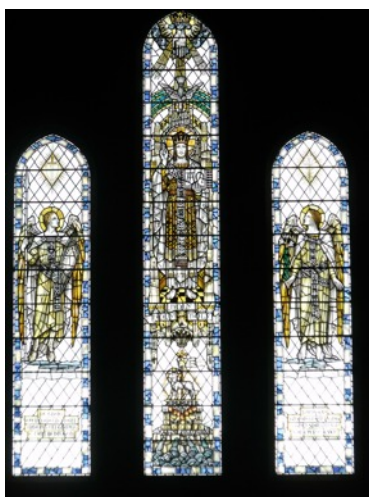
Christmas Social

Friday 5th December at 7:30pm
at the Museum

There will be seasonal entertainment and refreshments. All members are welcome to join us.

Heritage Open Day 2014

A chance to visit some of our historic buildings



Stained glass at St Peter's



Pictures: John Girvan

The Second Heritage Open day in Devizes will take place this year on Saturday 13th September. We have built on last year's success and three more buildings have been added - St Peter's Church in the Bath Road, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in St Joseph's Walk and Wyndham's, also in St Joseph's Walk.

St Peter's Church has some lovely stained glass windows (see above) and will also be displaying the plans for the development of the former St Peter's senior schools.

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception is the only Catholic church in Devizes and has strong links with Wyndhams, which is currently the home of Community First but due to be sold for housing development on 11th September.

The building was a convent school between 1889 and 1969, and photos of the school will be displayed during the day. This is the last chance for former pupils to see Wyndhams as it was when they were at school.

Other buildings which will be open on the day are St Mary's, St John's and St James' church, the Masonic Hall in Morris Lane and the Town Lockup beneath the Town Hall, where John Girvan will be leading visits from 11am until 3pm. Entry to the Wiltshire Museum in Long Street will be free all day.

A leaflet setting out the buildings in more detail is included in this addition of Trust News. Please pass it on to a neighbour/friend if you cannot go along yourself.

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