

From the Editor

I am delighted that we are at long last able to share with you some good news about Devizes Assize Court. The future of this historic building has been a thorn in the Trust's side for many years and the announcement made today is like having an early Christmas present!

There is still an enormous amount of work to be done to raise the funds needed over the next 10 years but, from now on, the project is in safe hands. The Devizes Assize Court Trust will be working with the community as it develops its plans and we look forward to the Trust playing a major part in that process.

Current plans for the conservation and conversion of the Assize Court as a new home for the museum include a larger event space for meetings and lectures, café, dedicated education space for schools, adequate space for staff, volunteers and researchers and on-site collections storage. The new building will also be available for community use.

The next steps are to undertake urgent works to prevent further deterioration of the building. The Devizes Assize Court Trust, working with the museum, will be selecting architects to begin developing detailed plans for how the building can be used.

The Trust hopes to be involved at every stage of the process. We will be holding a meeting on January 24th at the Town Hall. 7pm for a 7:30pm start at which we will discuss the implications for the Trust of this important project. Please put the date in your diary.

Philippa Morgan

ASSIZE COURT SAVED AT LAST!

Restoration is in prospect after years of neglect



This picture of the interior of the Assize Court shows the scale of the task ahead

Following years of decay in the hands of various owners, a bright future now beckons for the Assize Court. Thanks to support from the Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust and a generous local benefactor, ownership has now been secured by the recently formed Devizes Assize Court Trust.

A major fund-raising campaign will be launched with the aim of restoring the building and fitting it out as the new home of the Wiltshire Museum, with purpose-built galleries, a café, a lecture theatre and other community spaces.

The longer-term ambition is to link the Assize Court to the Wharf, the redevelopment of which forms an important part of Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy.

A professional survey of the building has been recently commissioned which advises that the Assize Court is capable of being saved, despite the past neglect. A programme of urgent works has been proposed to prevent further serious deterioration. The Devizes Assize Court Trust have secured funding for these immediate works, and will then lead the major fund-raising effort to deliver the whole project.

Lord Lansdowne, Chairman of the Trust

said: *"I am delighted that the Devizes Assize Court Trust has secured the purchase of this important building for Devizes and Wiltshire. Through the generosity of both the Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust and a local benefactor, together with the support of Wiltshire Council, we look forward to starting urgent work on the building which has been redundant for more than 30 years. Bringing it back into use will be a milestone in local history. Whilst the restoration will be a challenge it is one that the Trust looks forward to; recognising the positive impact for the town, the local community and Wiltshire."*

What happens next?

The Wiltshire Museum has developed a business plan that shows that it can manage and run the building, based on existing revenues and supported by increased visitor numbers and visitor spending. It intends the building to be available for a range of community uses, and will seek to ensure that these complement, rather than compete with other facilities in the town. There will be a range of consultation events to help develop plans for the building with plenty of opportunities to discuss ideas and concerns.

Seen Around Town

Potential life savers



We expect you have seen these 'defibrillators' appear all over the Town? Do you know where they are? Ten altogether - answers below!

A defibrillator can restart the heart if it stops or becomes very irregular in a heart attack. What to do is simple - start mouth to mouth if breathing has stopped, and get someone to ring 999. The trained operator will then tell you what to do and will direct a helper to the nearest machine - giving a code number to gain access.

The machine itself is very straightforward and you simply follow the voice instructions it gives you.

Meantime, the paramedics are on the way to help and will take over from you.

If by any chance you went directly to the machine you would still need a mobile phone to get the code and hence the machine.

Hopefully you will never need it, but better to be prepared!

(Thanks to the Town Council for looking after the machines and ensuring they are ready to use)

Answers - Hillworth Park; Ambulance Station; Old Post Office - opposite Sainbury's; Public toilet at the Crammer; Public toilet (superloo) at the West Central car park; Old Swan Yard; Carpet Rite in New Park Street; the WI HQ at the Wharf and not forgetting the Bear Hotel.

Devizes School poetry competition

Last year, the Trust sponsored an essay competition marking Jane Austen's bicentenary. This year the subject was the unfortunate Ruth Pierce, whose tale is told on the Market Cross. This is the second prize winner, by Holly Budgell (year 7) who gives the tale a modern twist.

It was a fine summer's morning
And a group of four young friends
Never saw the warning
That would mean their happiness
would come to ends.

It was a practical joke
That three of them jumped out as one
Meaning she dropped her phone and it
broke
Which wasn't much fun.

They all pitched in to offer their money
To afford for a repair
But young Ruth Pierce was acting a
little funny
She had no desire or will to share.

So when they went to the shop
And counted the amount
There was not enough money so they

had to stop
And were forced to walk on out.

'Ruth you didn't pay!'
She lied of course, being a stubborn
kid
And she just had to say
'I swear on my Instagram followers, I
did!'

Ruth's own phone beeped
And to her almighty horror
Karma had leaped
And the teen had left no single
follower.

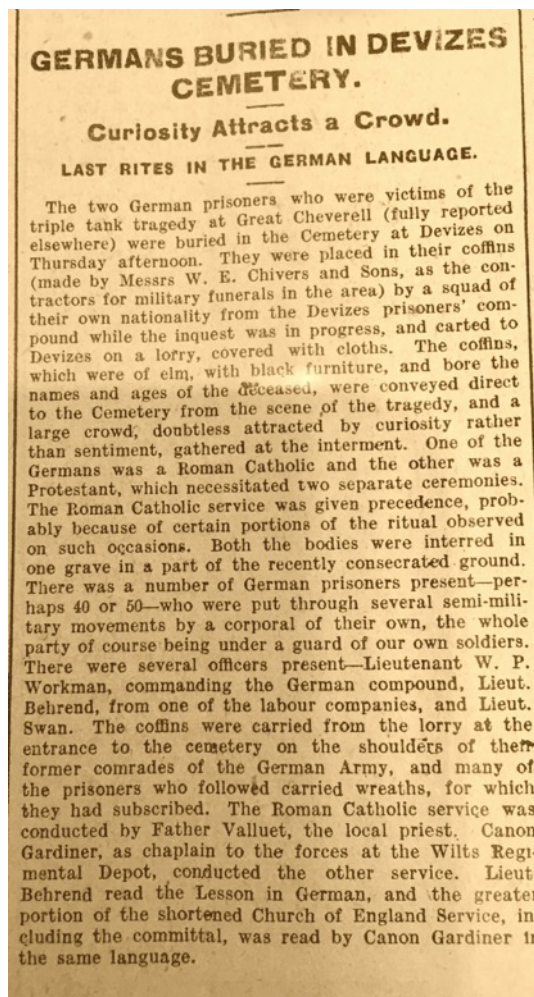
Out of sheer humiliation
Ruth gave up her change
And there was never an explanation
For the Instagram mystery - how
strange.

A curious tale from WWI

Philippa Morgan shares a discovery

I was recently at a loose end in the Library in Devizes Museum and spent some time looking at the attached article which appeared in in the Wiltshire Telegraph on Saturday August 31st 1918. I was fascinated by this particular story as it seemed such a very decent and kind thing to do. I wondered whether the graves had been marked in anyway as it would have been good to follow up this story. I contacted the Town Clerk, Simon Fisher, to see if there was any information in the records held at the Town Hall.

After some investigation, Simon was able to tell me that the all the German soldiers buried in the Cemetery were exhumed and repatriated after the war. That was surely the best outcome but I remain impressed with the kindness with which these individual soldiers were treated after their death.



Henry Tull

Inez Skinner concludes her account of this prominent citizen of Devizes



This advertisement was found in The Wiltshire Museum

Henry was a very active member of the Baptist Congregation which had its chapel in Maryport Street, Devizes. He was Secretary for the congregation for many years and was so interested in the Baptist way of life that he wrote a history of the local branch, which was published in the Wiltshire Gazette for 31st August, 1922. (This can be seen at the Wiltshire Record Office, where there is an archive of local newspapers covering many years.)

Henry's account names some of the men connected with the congregation from its beginnings as a separate community in 1645. Thomas Webb, a cloth merchant born in 1672, made notes about the local Baptists.

The year 1689, the local minister, James Webb, attended the First General Assembly, one of its aims being "the raising up of an able and honourable ministry for the time to come" A central fund was suggested to support the ministry in small places and Devizes paid into this fund for many years.

In 1699 the first church document was written which formalised the rules and regulations regarding the management of the community.

In the first Church record book, dated 1704, there were 23 Brethren and 36 Sisters on the roll. The greatest number of names on the roll at any one time was 100 and many of the names relate to families who are still living in the area today.

In 1773 Valentine Leach, owner of Devizes Castle, granted a lease regarding 22 The Brittox to the Baptist community for a meeting place. This is where Henry and Hannah lived in the mid 1900s!

From the records nearer to the present day, in 1941 a letter was sent to the Minister for War saying that the Chapel could not give its iron railings to the war effort as the property needed to be protected at all times from vandalism by

local youths and attempts at burglary.

In 1943 a Church meeting notes 6 men and 21 women as being present. It seems to be the case that there are always many more women than men on the list of members.

The congregation was always under the scrutiny of the Trustees. Members who did not worship regularly were sent a letter asking them to attend all meetings or they would be asked to leave the congregation. Newcomers wanting to join the church were visited at home by a couple of approved members and the home and life as it was lived there was discussed with the Minister to decide whether the incomers would be suitable members of the congregation. One married woman whose husband was a soldier and therefore away from home a lot took a lodger and this was frowned upon. She was eventually asked to leave the congregation.

Henry became Treasurer for the congregation in 1913 when Jabez Chivers retired after 14 years in the post. Henry was to serve for 40 years until in 1953 a letter was sent on his behalf to say that he needed to resign because of failing eyesight. The Trustees accepted this with great reluctance and the secretary was instructed to write to Henry expressing their appreciation of his help and co-operation during the many years of his Trusteeship.

When Henry died, the Minute Book of the Almshouse Charities recorded that the late Mr. Tull had always taken great interest in the charities particularly the Almshouses Trust. A few moments silence was observed as a token of the respect and esteem held by the Trustees.

It can be seen that Henry Tull was a very upstanding member of the wider community that comprised Devizes during the earlier part of the 1900s, not just a shoe-shop proprietor in the Brittox, and his legacy exists in five of the Almshouses in Sedgfield Gardens.

Museum News

A selection of forthcoming events

Lecture: Recovering Lost Music of Medieval Wiltshire by Graham Bathe

24 November 2018 2:30pm-4:00pm
£7 (£4.50 WANHS members)

Lecture: Return to the Antikythera by Phil Short

8 December 2018 2:30pm - 4:00pm
Lecture Hall, Wiltshire Museum
£7 (£4.50 WANHS members)

Course: Drawing on the Ancient Past with artist Helen Garrett

During this eight-week course you will be Drawing on the Ancient Past for inspiration, and experiment with new and exciting materials including graphite, charcoal, grinding raw earth pigments and painting in gold.

With access to some of the artefacts in the Wiltshire Museum collection, this is a unique opportunity to connect with history in a closely profound and imaginative way.

Tuesdays 15th January – 12th March 2019. 10:30am - 1:00pm (Term time only, no session on Tuesday 19 February 2018) Cost £140.

Exhibitions

Wiltshire Remembers: Aftermath of the First World War

20th October 2018-23rd February 2019
Wiltshire Museum

This moving exhibition, curated by Richard Broadhead and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, features a Wall of Remembrance dedicated to the 10,000 Wiltshire fallen.

Snakes – A Slither into a Secretive Life

2nd March 2019 - 28th April 2019
Wiltshire Museum, Oexmann Gallery

Come along to the new exhibition opening from March next year to learn more about the fascinating life of snakes from all around the world. This exciting exhibition from uses displays of taxidermy, skeletons and award-winning photography.

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

September's Open Meeting

a useful exchange of views

There were 22 people in attendance at the open meeting on 27th September, which was on the subject of the review of the Devizes Neighbourhood Plan.

Simon Fisher, Town Clerk, gave a presentation setting out the process for the review. He explained that the original plan was produced in 2014/15 in preparation for the Referendum which took place in 2015 and was overwhelmingly supported by the community. Planning changes and the need to add more elements to the original plan meant that the review was now needed.

The planning period covered is from 2004 – 2026 and it seemed likely that there will be demands from central government for additional housing during that period and beyond. The review therefore needs to look more widely than the current town boundary. He invited comments on how this should be addressed.

A lively discussion followed. Issues raised included:

- the impact which a railway station might have on housing development
- the current southern boundary should be retained
- improved public transport was essential to avoid gridlock
- more homes would inevitably increase traffic and this should be factored in to any proposed developments
- there was a need to set aside land for existing businesses to grow and new businesses to come into the town
- jobs in Devizes need to be created and working from home offered in order to reduce outward commuting

Simon thanked attendees for their feedback. The meeting closed at 9pm.

Dates for your diary

The Assize Court

A special public meeting to discuss the latest news about the Assize Court building and its future.

24th January 2019 at 7pm for 7:30

At the Assembly Rooms, Devizes Town Hall

Admission free - refreshments will be available

Electric cars save the world!

But not quite yet... Philippa Morgan reports

Has the time come for electric cars to enter the mainstream, and put a stop to the deadly pollution we currently suffer? I spoke to Trust Member Chris Callow who owns a Nissan Leaf and is well acquainted with the issues affecting electric car owners. What follows is based on Chris' experience with the Leaf.

Unlike hybrid cars, which have an electric motor and battery as well as an internal combustion engine, electric cars are totally dependent on the battery for power. The average, stated mileage covered by the Leaf is 168 miles per charge. This is fine for short distance journeys but more problematic for longer journeys and drivers need to plan for stops en route to charge the battery.

Those of you who can remember the VHS versus Betamax battle in the 1970s will know what's coming next. Various companies such as Ecotricity, Polar, Charge-your-car, Shell recharge, Tesla and Instavolt provide charging points but these are only available to their subscribers.

There are three different types of charger. Type 1 uses the household mains and typically takes 7.5 hours. Type 2 is a "fast" charger and takes 3-5 hours for a full charge. No 3 is a 'rapid' charger and a full charge takes 20 - 40 minutes. As you can see, before any journey, detailed research and planning are needed. It's not like driving into a petrol station and filling up. More like a military operation!

As if that wasn't enough, there is only one battery charging point in Devizes. Well, there are two actually, both in the Station Road car park but Chris tells me that one isn't working. These are Type 2 chargers so will take at least 3 hours for a full charge

but, surprise, surprise, they are located in the short-stay part of the car park which has a maximum stay of 3 hours! In contrast, there is a bank of four chargers in the car park at the rear of County Hall in Trowbridge (*picture below*). All seem to be working!

It is still early days for the battery car as we know it now, although electric vehicles first appeared in the mid-19th century and an electric vehicle held the land speed record until around 1900. The Nissan Leaf was introduced in 2010 and 350,000 have now been sold world wide. The range of miles covered has gradually increased from 100 to the current 168 miles as battery technology has improved.

We can expect further improvements in battery technology but there will still be a demand for adequate charging units in public places. Devizes, and indeed Wiltshire as a whole, simply does not have enough chargers in the right place for this to become a viable option for most people.

More needs to be done and the Trust will be raising this issue with our Wiltshire Council representatives.



Two of Wiltshire Council's four chargers

Trust News is published by:

The Trust for Devizes,
c/o Wiltshire Museum,
41 Long St,
Devizes,
SN10 1NS

Editor - Philippa Morgan
info@trustfordevizes.info

The officers of the Trust are :

Chairman

Acting Hon. Secretary Philippa Morgan info@trustfordevizes.info

Hon. Treasurer James Flood jamesfloodsenior@ndirect.co.uk

The Trust is a Registered Charity No 259653



www.trustfordevizes.info