

From the Editor

We're already halfway through 2022. The Trust AGM has been and gone. The weather has been more or less kind to us. And Devizes remains very much the same as it has been for years.

However... As I write, there are two large and two medium size planning applications at various stages in the planning process. If they were all to go ahead, it would mean that another 400 or so houses/flats in Devizes could be built in the next few years.

We know that there will be a need for more development over the next ten years, as our housing allocation is set at around 330 additional dwellings over that period. We are in the process of developing a revised Neighbourhood Plan which will indicate sites which would be suitable for development. But until that revised Plan is in place, there is a real danger that sites which are considered unsuitable, such as the Coate Road development, will go ahead regardless.

The Trust will continue to do whatever it can to stop these larger developments going ahead. We recognise that there is a need for more housing but this should be as part of a plan which recognises the need to integrate development within an overall development plan for our town.

On a brighter note, plans to redevelop the Assize Court are going ahead smoothly. Diocesan approval has been giving for the St Mary's project and invitations to tender for the project were sent out in April. The Devizes Arts Festival is going ahead in June. Devizes Carnival will be on July 9th this year. So there is a lot for us to look forward to and to be cheerful about!

If you are able to access our website, we will be making minutes of our monthly Trustee meetings available in the next few weeks. We hope you will find these useful.

Philippa Morgan

Coate Road - the saga continues

A new application has been submitted



The new proposal, with Coate Rd along the southern edge and the Kennet & Avon Canal to the north.

Trust members will not be surprised to learn that developers have now submitted new plans for housing development on the site off the Coate Road and adjacent to the Kennet and Avon Canal.

The new plan is for 200 units, down from the 235 on the previous application, with a neighbourhood centre which could include a pub and takeaway or other commercial business.

This site has been the subject of planning applications for more than ten years and an earlier application was overturned by the Secretary of State after it was granted by the Planning Inspectorate on appeal in October 2014. The reasons given for overturning the appeal were as follows

"This is a finely balanced case. Overall, the Secretary of State considers that the proposed development would represent an extension of the built-up area beyond the current urban boundary. He recognises that it would represent a sustainable form of development and that, as the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, the key Kennet Local Plan policy is out-of-date.

Nevertheless, in the particular circumstances of this case, he does not consider that the benefits of the scheme significantly or demonstrably outweigh its adverse impacts, particularly as a result of the conflicts with the emerging Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan strategy."

In the Trust's view, these reasons remain valid. The revised application continues to be inappropriate in scale and is outside the current Neighbourhood Plan.

It is a greenfield site and is not needed for housing development in Devizes at this time because there are other, better options which will be considered in the revised Neighbourhood Plan. It would cause substantial harm to open countryside, on the edge of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

However Wiltshire Council is still unable to demonstrate that it has a 5 year housing land supply, so there will be even greater pressure on the Council to grant permission for this development. The Trust will continue to campaign vigorously against this proposal and we are confident that we will be able to push back this application again.

The Rotherstone Pillbox

Getting a bit of TLC



Trust stalwart John Girvan outside the pillbox

The Trust was instrumental in obtaining heritage listing status for the WWII Pillbox at Rotherstone on 28 June 2010.

We were approached by the Canal and Rivers Trust earlier this year, as they are intending to carry out some repair works to the pillbox

As part of that work they will be replacing the door and fitting grilles to the window openings to prevent the site becoming filled up with litter. They also hope to install some bat boxes to the inside to support wildlife and will be adding an information board about the pillbox.

We were aware of the litter problem and are delighted that they are carrying out this work to prevent it happening in future.

They approached us because of the metal plaque with the date of listing and the Trust for Devizes name engraved. The work was subject to a Listed Building Consent application which has now been approved.

The Devil's Jump

Philippa Morgan on a piece of local history



The postcard, with the story of The Devils Jump

I recently acquired a postcard which intrigued me because it was about the 'Legend of the horse-shoe and the Devil's Jump' and was in some way related to St Edith's Marsh, Devizes. It also interested me that the postcard was sold by a USA dealer. How did it get there? And what is the story all about?

After some online research, I found a reference to an artwork by W R Newman, now in Devizes Town Hall entitled '*Waller Bombards Devizes from the Devil's Jump*,' Was this the same Devil's Jump as the one in the postcard? Further investigation revealed that 'Waller' was Sir William Waller, an English soldier and politician, who commanded Parliamentary armies during the First English Civil War. In August 1642, Waller was appointed a colonel, capturing Portsmouth, Farnham, Winchester and other key locations in

southern England. In early 1643, Waller was promoted to Major General and given command of the Western Association army, his opponent being Sir Ralph Hopton, an old friend leading Royalist forces in the west.

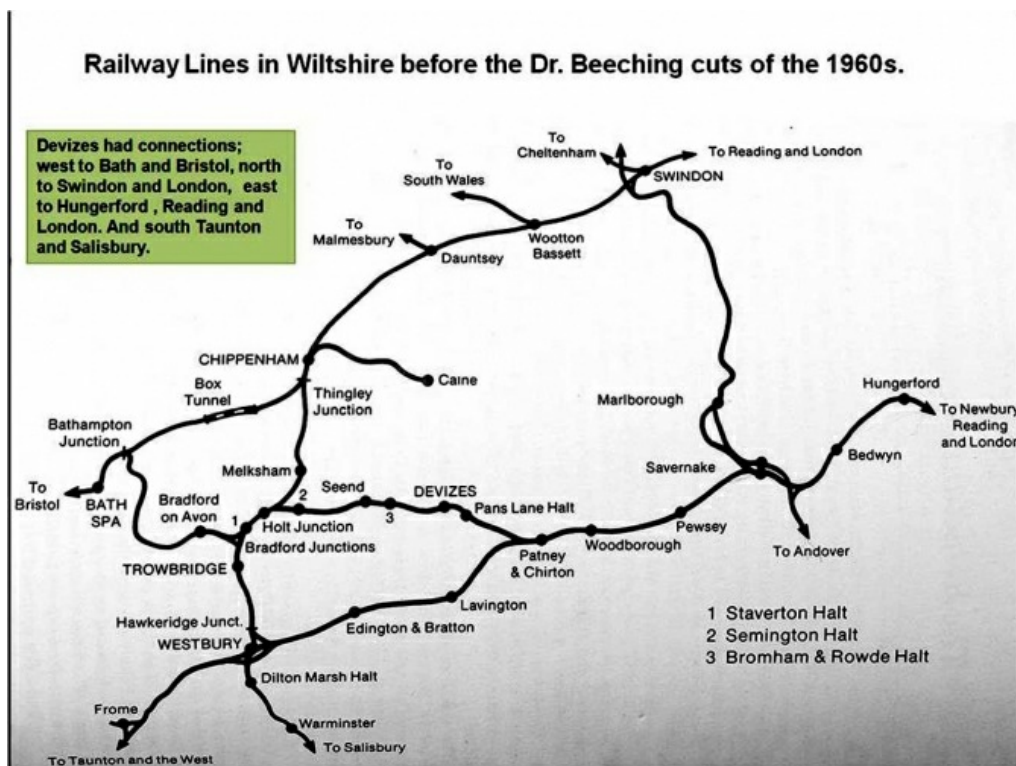
After the inconclusive Battle of Lansdown on 5 July 1643, Hopton was joined by Prince Maurice and, on 13 July, their combined force destroyed Waller's army at Roundway Down. This victory has been described as the most sweeping victory the royalists ever won. Though Waller and some of his cavalry escaped to Bristol, for all practical purposes his army had been annihilated. 'Such,' wrote Waller, 'was my dismal defeat at Roundway Down'.

I have no idea how this postcard ended up in the USA and am still not much clearer on the real story behind the Devil's Jump. Can anyone shed any further light on it?



The wood panel is one of a collection at the Town Hall

The Berks and Hants Railway



With all the recent excitement about the possibility of a Devizes Gateway railway station, it is interesting to look back to the mid-19th Century to find out about the original branch line which connected Devizes to the national railway network.

It began in 1845 when the Bill for the Berks and Hants line passed in Parliament. The line originally linked Reading with Newbury, Hungerford and Basingstoke and was completed in 1848 when Basingstoke station opened.

The Bill for adding a branch line west of Hungerford to Devizes passed through Parliament in 1847 and the Berks and Hants Extension Railway was opened from Hungerford to Devizes on 11 November 1862.

At Devizes, the Extension Railway

connected with a branch line from Holt Junction on the Wilts, Somerset and Weymouth line which allowed through trains over the Berks and Hants to Bristol Temple Meads. A new cut-off line was opened on 29 July 1909 from a new station called Patney and Chirton to Westbury which allowed a shorter journey via Hungerford to Weymouth from where passengers could sail to the Channel Islands.

We can see from the map above the extent of the railway system in Wiltshire before the Beeching cuts in the 1960s. We can only hope that the proposed railway station goes ahead in due course, opening up the possibilities for Devizes residents and visitors to have easier access to public transport options.

Are your details correct?

Help us keep up to date

We try to keep our membership records current. This helps us to get your Trust News to you, and avoid sending out copies of Trust News and other items to people who no longer want them.

You can help! If you have changed your address, or no longer wish to be a member of the Trust, please contact the Honorary Secretary at the address on page 4.

Museum News

A selection of forthcoming events

Hardy's Wessex exhibition: Meet the Curator

Date: Thursday 16 June

Time: 5.30 pm

Cost: £12 (£10 WANHS members),
to include wine/nibbles

*See the separate article
(overleaf) for details of this
exciting exhibition.*

Day Course: Ancient Landscapes Seen and Imagined, with Helen Garrett.

Date: Saturday 25 June

Time: 10.30 am to 3.30 pm

Cost: £50 (£45 WANHS members), to include all materials.

Day course: Stone Carving with Andrew Ziminski

Sunday 10 July or Sunday 4 September

Time: 10.30 am to 4 pm

Cost: £110 per person (to include all materials).

OUTING: Stonehenge Landscape Walk

Sunday 17 July 2022

£20 (£15 WANHS members)

Further Dates – Wednesday 21
September 2022

Wood Engraving with Robin Mackenzie

Time: 10.30 am to 4 pm

Cost: £70 (to include all materials).

**CONFERENCE: Industrial
Archaeology – Building
Materials**

15th October 2022

Time: 9:30 am - 4:30 pm

Cost: £15 (£13 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

Thomas Hardy's Wessex

A major new exhibition

From 28th May - 30th October 2022, there will be a major exhibition across four venues – Dorset Museum (Dorchester), Poole Museum, The Salisbury Museum and Wiltshire Museum (Devizes). Each museum will focus on a different aspect of the work of Thomas Hardy.

The exhibition at Wiltshire Museum will explore how Hardy's writing merged his present with the past. Hardy was a man torn between two worlds – the ancient past and his life in a time of rapid scientific advances. Hardy felt that the past ways of life were important, helping us to understand ourselves and our relationship with the environment.

The exhibition will aim to explain this conflict by comparing two fascinating items. One is his hand-annotated copy of Einstein's new theories. The other is his 'Book of Facts', in which he recorded old beliefs and superstitions as well as stranger-than-fiction real-life events from newspaper clippings. These would later help to inspire his plots.

The exhibition will also include a West Country wax poppet (doll), as used in his novel 'Return of the Native' to curse the beautiful Eustacia Vye.

Of course, Devizes has a more recent link with Hardy's work as it was one of the places featuring in the 1967 film 'Far From The Madding Crowd'. The filming took place for about a week in October 1966 and a number of locals had parts as extras in the film. This link takes you to a fascinating YouTube clip from Devizes TV:

<https://tinyurl.com/FFTMC>

And this link takes you to the Wessex Museums website:

<https://tinyurl.com/HardysWessex>

Dates for your diary

It is our intention to hold a Christmas Social this year. The provisional date is Thursday 15th December 2022. More details will be in the next edition of Trust News.

Finally – The Trust AGM 2022!

A subhead

The Trust AGM was held in the Assembly Room at Devizes Town Hall on the 24th March 2022. This was the first AGM since March 2019 as we were not able to hold an AGM in 2020 or 2021 due to Covid lockdown. It was lovely to see 30 or so people at the meeting and it felt that we were almost back to normal.

Unfortunately, our guest speaker Danny Kruger MP was unable to attend due to Parliamentary business. At less than a day's notice, we were very fortunate to have an 'oven-ready' presentation by David Dawson, Director of the Wiltshire Museum and one of our Trustees.

David was able to give us up-to-date information on the Assize Court project. It was good to hear about all the work that has been going on behind the scenes, particularly on the possible layout of the building. The fund raising is also in hand although there is a long way to go before anything can be guaranteed.

One of the issues that we had hoped would be discussed by our MP was the proposed change to the planning legislation which were set out in a Government

White Paper launched in August 2020. The Trustees had raised some concerns at an earlier meeting with Mr Kruger and we were hoping for an update.

Richard Ormerod mentioned the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission's final report which argued for a stronger and more predictable planning system, for greater democratic involvement in planning decisions, and for a new model of long-term stewardship as the precondition for large developments. The report also called on planners to 'ask for beauty' and 'refuse ugliness'.

Richard led a short discussion on whether the Trust should be aiming to improve building design for new properties to ensure that they were better aligned with the "Devizes style", i.e. red brick and Bath stone. The general consensus was that the Trust should aim to ensure that new developments were built to a higher standard than at present.

All Trustees signalled a willingness to stand again and the meeting came to a conclusion. We would like to thank all those who were able to attend.

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