

Chairman's Report

The AGM of the Trust will be held in the Town Hall on 14th March and we hope to see a large number of our members there. Our guest speaker this year is Jane Scott, Chairman of Wiltshire Council, who is a key figure in the local decision-making processes. Please bring your questions along for her to answer. The AGM is also a regular opportunity for members to elect the Committee of the Trust, not to elect them if things have not been done satisfactorily, or to put forward suggestions for changes. The Committee will welcome your views on what you want us to do for the future. It is also a good time for members to offer their assistance or to volunteer to join the Committee.

We have led some successful campaigns against unwelcome developments but we also want to encourage good developments and we support the current efforts by Devizes, Roundway and Bishops Cannings Councils to develop a joint Neighbourhood Plan. The need for that plan is urgent because land speculators can put forward planning proposals for almost anything until we have the Plan in place. We need developments that benefit our community, not developments that simply maximise developers' profits.

Ted East

LOCAL PLANNING Taking the battle to Whitehall



Representatives of the Trust, Devizes CAB and Claire Perry MP
with Planning Minister Nick Bowles
Photo: Gazette and Herald

One outcome of the protest rally against the proposed development at Coate Bridge was the intervention of our MP, Claire Perry, who arranged for a delegation from the town to meet Nick Boles, the Planning Minister.

On 24th January Wiltshire Councillors Laura Mayes, Nigel Carter and Richard Gamble accompanied by Tony Sedgwick and Rick Rowlands representing The Devizes Community Area Partnership plus Alistair Cunningham, Wiltshire's Director of Economy and Regeneration met Claire and Nick Boles at Westminster to put our case forward. Clearly the Minister could not talk about the individual case and the discussion centred on what weight would be given to Wiltshire's Core Strategy, since it was still progressing slowly through the examination by the Minister's own department.

The team took this opportunity to stress that the community had been able to

discuss the contents of the Core Strategy in great detail through DCAP and were satisfied that it was the best possible strategy for the town given the conflicting issues of traffic congestion and the high demand for housing.

Clearly the Government is committed to a house building programme and Mr Boles stressed that Devizes had to take its share. Councillor Mayes confirmed that the Council had identified land suitable for sufficient housing to meet the Core Strategy targets for the next few years and would continue to do so for the duration of that plan (2026).

The group agreed that we had been able to put our case at this high level and had received some valuable pointers as to how best to protect our community from developers anxious to cash in on the planning void before the Core Strategy becomes the official planning guidance. Thanks are due to Claire Perry for affording the town this opportunity.

How are we doing?

The Trust for Devizes exists to maintain the quality of the amenities of Devizes and its environs, particularly the built environment. The Trust does not oppose new developments or changes to the built environment but does seek to ensure that they are of a type and quality that enhances the street scene and are of benefit to the community.

Your Committee is very aware that we have recently taken much more of a campaigning stance in opposing developments which, in our view, go against our core objective. But we can only do so if we are acting with the approval of you, our members. So, are we right to pursue this line of activity?

We hold regular 'Socials' which are attended by only a small percentage of our membership. Should we do something different which will appeal to more of our members? How can we attract new members to the Trust?

Do you look forward to receiving your copy of Trust News? If not, what could we do to improve it?

We are enclosing with this edition of Trust News a short questionnaire which we would be grateful if you would complete and return to us, either at the AGM or by post to Inez Skinner.

Philippa Morgan

Coate Bridge Developments

by Ted East



The map shows the approximate extent of the development, with Windsor Drive to the west and the canal to the north.

In 2011 a Scottish company, Mactaggart & Mickle (M&M), appeared in Devizes seeking opinions on a proposal to build around 350 houses on land to the East of Windsor Drive. That company was told that the local community did not want the development because it would not meet local needs and would add to our problems caused by too many housing estates. Not deterred, they returned last year and launched a second consultation. Why are they here and have they ever laid a single brick outside Scotland? M&M started as genuine house builders in Glasgow but, after the retirement of their founders, new directors seem to have decided that land speculation in England would be more rewarding than building in Glasgow. M&M could obtain planning permission then sell the land, let another company do the building and leave our community to suffer the consequences.

We joined forces with DCAP and CPRE to propose a resolution at the November Area Board meeting opposing the M&M proposal. That resolution was enthusiastically approved and led to a public demonstration on The Green in December. Our MP, Claire Perry, arranged a meeting between local representatives and housing minister, Nick Boles, in January to discuss local concerns about the adverse effects of excessive housing estates on Devizes, the way in which the planning system operates and about the Coate Bridge proposal in particular.

Undeterred, M&M have now submitted a formal planning application for a major housing development at Coate Bridge. But, what an application it is! There are 69 documents submitted. They have taken all the concerns expressed during the extensive consultations and used consultants to produce large voluminous

reports in support of their application over the last year or two. This illustrates how the dice are loaded in favour of developers by the planning system. Land speculators can make very large profits from the increase in the value of agricultural land once it has planning permission, so they invest money in expensive consultants and lawyers to get planning permission.

Meanwhile, in comparison, the Wiltshire Council planners have quite limited resources and the time they have to prepare arguments against the application is limited to a few weeks. Even if the Council denies planning approval, the speculators can appeal and a government inspector can approve the development based simply on the particular application and an arbitrary application of planning rules without regard to the longer term consequences for the community. That has happened many times here in Devizes so that our infrastructure is now seriously overstretched by population growth. The speculators are often awarded costs against the Council at an appeal, making the Council even less inclined to oppose the speculators.

So we will have to wait and see what happens at Coate Bridge. Will the delegation to the Minister have any effect? Will it be another case of big bonuses for the speculators and a big loss for the community or will we to see localism begin to have some meaning?

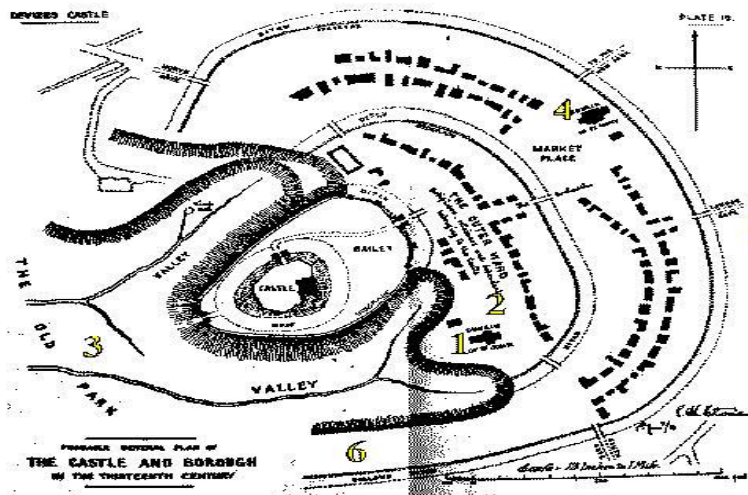
Have your say! Review the application and comment on it using the following link:

<http://tinyurl.com/CoateBridge>

Or write to Rob Parker at Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8JN quoting application E/2013/0083/OUT.

The Social Organisation of Medieval Devizes

Holly Hunt-Watts describes the early history of the town



Medieval sites in Devizes

- 1 St John the Baptist's Church
- 2 Approximate site of Medieval hall
- 3 The Deer Park
- 4 St Mary's Church
- 5 Approximate site of Leper Hospital
- 6 Approximate site of town gallows

Devizes started life as a Norman ringwork castle constructed by Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury in the 11th century and was located on the boundaries of the manors Rowde, Bishops Cannings and Potterne, on a highly defensive promontory. The streets developed around the castle in a concentric design, visible in any aerial photograph, which is evidence that the town was planned from the start of its development. Historic buildings and archaeology found around Devizes shed light on the social organisation of the medieval world, from the activities of the wealthy to the residences of the destitute.

The planned town suggests that rich, prominent people were present in the medieval period, and archaeological evidence reveals advantaged areas. The castle served as a central point in organisation and by examining the location of sites used by the medieval elite it is clear that important places, such as St John the Baptist's church, the deer park, a hall and other domestic residences are nearer to this focal point within the defences. The sites and objects connected to the poor, ill, criminal and the general public are found further from the centre. The leper hospital, gallows, and St Mary's Church are located either around the edges of the town or outside the town walls.

But why were two churches built at around the same time in the 12th century positioned in such contrasting locations? The answer to this question may lie in the intended congregation of each building. St John's was used by the

garrison from the castle and its position, so close to the central focus of the town, reflects this. On the other hand, St Mary's was built for congregations of the townsfolk in Devizes, a function highlighted by its removed location on the old boundary. The names of each church also provide a clue, St John being the patron saint for warrior knights whereas Mary, with all the virtuous connotations associated with her, was chosen for the people's church. The locations of the churches provided ease of access to their intended congregations but also marked them out as different from each other.

That Devizes has survived through time shows the importance of the town as a centre of trade and commerce in the region and it provides us with a limited insight into medieval life. It is both a benefit and a problem that Devizes developed into the modern town it is today. On the one hand it shows us the progression the town made, but on the other, deserted medieval towns such as Almondbury in Yorkshire have clearer surviving evidence for social organisation than Devizes has. The answer to the problem of how to obtain evidence about medieval settlements is to examine both deserted medieval towns and surviving ones in the study of medieval organisation.

Holly wrote this piece as part of a project on what the archaeological evidence can tell about medieval social organisation and lifestyle in Devizes. This was part of her degree course at the University of Exeter

Museum News

Forthcoming talks and lectures at the Museum

SATURDAY LECTURE:

Climate Change, Epidemic Disease and History: the Case of the Black Death

2:30 pm, Saturday, 09 March, 2013

CONFERENCE:

Archaeology in Wiltshire

9:30 am, Saturday, 16 March, 2013

SATURDAY LECTURE:

The Romans who Shaped Britain

2:30 pm, Saturday, 13 April, 2013

A new exhibition, *Operation Nightingale - Time Warriors* will open on 16th March. It will feature the amazing artefacts uncovered during excavation of a Bronze Age burial mound and Saxon cemetery on Salisbury Plain. This excavation was carried out by the British Army with help from Wessex Archaeology as part of Operation Nightingale, an initiative which uses archaeology in the recovery of injured soldiers. The exhibition has been designed by volunteers as part of Project Florence, a Heritage Lottery Funded initiative running alongside Op Nightingale. Find out more about Project Florence at www.florence.opnightingale.co.uk.

A message from the Treasurer

It takes a considerable amount of time and money to prepare and distribute this newsletter. Our editors and contributors find all manner of interesting facts to incorporate in it. It would be good if you - the reader - would share whatever you have found fascinating in each issue with a friend or relation, and by so doing spread the knowledge of the Trust for Devizes and make excellent use of the mental and physical resources that have gone into the production of this newsletter. If your friends wish to join the Trust, so much the better!

Thank you to those members who have altered their standing order to £12, have set one up recently or have sent me the extra money because their standing order is still set at a lower figure..

Inez Skinner

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, send an email to info@trustfordevizes.info.

Dates for your diary

The Annual General meeting of the Trust will be held on **Thursday 14th March** at the Assembly Rooms in the Town Hall. Doors open at 7pm for a prompt 7:30 start. Our guest speaker will be Jane Scott, leader of Wiltshire Council, who will speak on Localism.

Our next social will take place on **Friday 28th June** at the Museum.

AGENDA for Annual General Meeting

Members of the public are welcome to attend, but only members of the Trust may vote

1. Introduction by Chairman
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising
4. Annual Report and questions from members
5. Election of committee and officers
All committee members are elected or re-elected at each AGM.
Elections take effect from the end of the AGM.
6. Any other business (previously notified matters only);
7. Close of AGM

REFRESHMENTS

Around Town

The End Of An Era...



The Gazette & Herald has now left its building in Devizes empty after it was announced at the end of January that the office and staff would be moving to Trowbridge.

This brings to an end nearly 200 years of the paper's association with the town. The G&H has always been at the heart of the Devizes community and its reporters have been quick to react to changes and events.

We are pleased to learn that Lewis Cowen and Jill Crooks will still be covering Devizes issues and we hope that the association can continue, albeit in a virtual form.

Picture: John Girvan

Trust News is published by:

The Trust For Devizes,
Fairfield House,
Potterne Road,
Devizes SN10 5AE

Editor - Philippa Morgan
email info@trustfordevizes.info

The officers of the Trust are :

Chairman	Edward East	email edward.east@virgin.net
Hon. Secretary	Tony Duck	email tonyduckworton@aol.com
Hon. Treasurer	Inez Skinner	email inezskinner@aol.com

The Trust is a Registered Charity No 259653



www.trustfordevizes.info