

# Trust News



Issue 143 - February 2016

## From the Editor

Tony Sedgwick, one of our longest serving Trustees, has reluctantly decided to stand down from the Trust Committee for personal reasons.

Ted East, former Chairman of the Trust, acknowledges Tony's extremely valuable contribution to the Trust's work:

"Tony's contribution to the Trust has been significant in many ways. I found him to be an invaluable member of the Committee and he was always one of the first to help with any Trust activities.

"His commercial experience enabled him to provide professional advice on the effects of traffic related to new housing developments. One example, from many, is that his evidence helped to persuade Wiltshire Council to amend the proposals for future housing developments for Devizes because of the adverse effects on traffic and pollution and that will continue to benefit this community."

But Tony's expertise in traffic matters was far from his only contribution to the Trust's activities as Ted recalls:

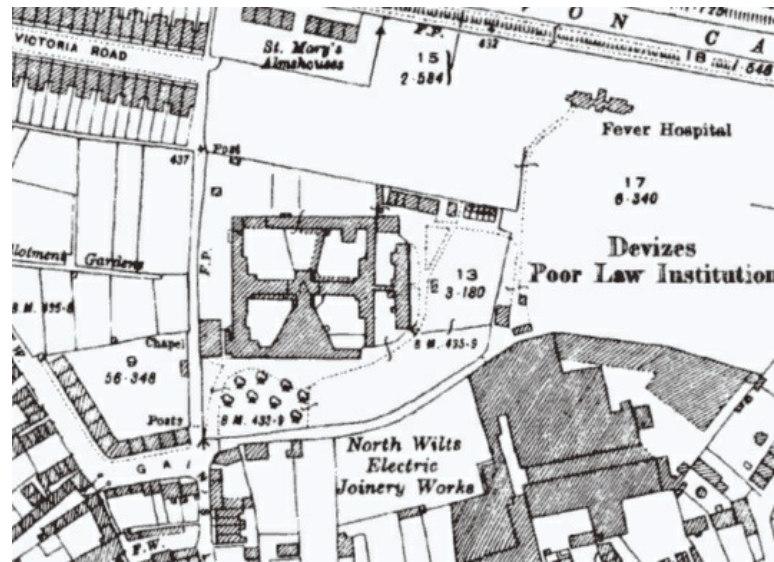
"Tony edited Trust News for several years and greatly improved it. He could always be relied on to produce informative articles on a very wide range of historical issues. In 2008, he was a major contributor to the revised and improved Town Trail booklet, and he set up the original Trust web site. It will be very difficult to find such a versatile member for the Committee to replace him."

Since taking over from Tony as editor of Trust News, I have been grateful to him for handing over a publication which was in a fine state. I have tried to live up to Tony's high standards editorially

*Continued overleaf*

## Devizes Union Workhouse

*A short history*



*The workhouse site in 1923.*

*Courtesy workhouses.org.uk*

Many of us are patients at St James' Surgery in Gains Lane but I wonder how many people know that the Surgery was built on the site of the Devizes Union Workhouse, later renamed as St James' Hospital?

The Workhouse was built in 1836-7 (see map) by the Devizes Poor Law Union. The Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834, placed the responsibility for looking after those who were considered to be 'poor' on unions of parishes. There were nearly 600 such unions throughout England, each one comprising 20 or more parishes.

The Devizes Poor Law Union was formed on 3rd November 1835 and initially comprised the parishes of All Cannings, Alton Barnes, Beeching Stoke, Bishops Cannings, Bromham, Chirton, Devizes St. James (or Southbroom), Devizes St. John the Baptist, Devizes St. Mary, Earl Stoke, Easterton, Etchilhampton, Great Cheverell, Little Cheverell, Marden, Market Lavington, Patney, Poulshot, Potterne, Rowde, Stanton St. Bernard, Stert, Urchfont, West Lavington and Worton]. Fullway was added in December 1861.

The population falling within the Union at the 1831 census was 28,638 with parishes ranging in size from from Alton Barnes (population 138) to Devizes St Mary (2,589). The average annual poor-rate expenditure for the period 1833-35 was £16,004 or 11s.8d. per head of the population.

The Poor Law Commissioners authorised an expenditure of £6,700 for construction of the Workhouse which was to accommodate 400 inmates. It was designed by George Wilkinson who was also the architect of many other workhouses including those for the Malmsbury, Cricklade and Wootton Bassett Unions. His design for Devizes was a variation on the Commissioners' model cruciform or "square" plan published in 1835. The workhouse site is shown on the 1923 map above.

There was an entrance and administration block at the south, behind which further accommodation radiated from a central octagonal hub to create separate exercise yards for the different classes of inmate (infirm/able-bodied, male/female). An infirmary block was added parallel to the east side of the workhouse in the late nineteenth century.

From 1904, to protect them from disadvantage in later life, the birth certificates for those born in the workhouse gave the address just as 7 Commercial Road, Devizes.

The institution was renamed St James' Hospital in 1948 and was used as a geriatric hospital until the 1990s when it was demolished. The doctor's surgery is now on one end of the site with a commercial premises, now occupied by United Oilseeds, at the other end.

## From the editor

*continued*

and having an excellent template to follow has made it so much easier to do so.

On a personal note, it was Tony who signed me up as a Trust member 8 or was it 9 years ago. His persuasive and friendly manner on the Trust's stall at the Lion's May Fair all those years ago convinced me that joining the Trust was a worthwhile thing to do and I have never regretted it.

Your Committee is always looking for new members and Tony's departure has left us with a gap which we would like to fill as soon as possible. So if you have some spare time and would like to get involved in what we do, please come along to the AGM and have a chat about what being a Trustee involves.

*Philippa Morgan*

## Planning Issues

Not one, not two, but three major planning issues are in the news this month.

A date has been set for the new public enquiry which is being held to reconsider the application for 350 houses to be built on land near Coate Bridge. Although the planning application was rejected by the then Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, the developers appealed against that decision. The enquiry will take place over 4 days, starting on Tuesday 5th April at 10am. It will be held in Braeside Education & Conference Centre, Bath Road, Devizes.

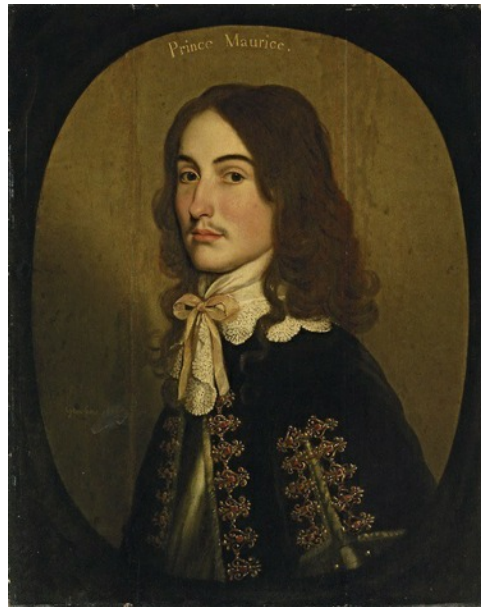
Secondly, there has been a surprise announcement that the revised proposal to build 123 homes on land off Quakers Walk has been called in by the Secretary of State. Views on the proposals must be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of February. Comments should be sent in triplicate, direct to the Planning Inspectorate, Room 3/10b Kite Wing, 2 The Square, Temple Quay House, Bristol BS1 6PN, quoting reference APP/Y3940/V/15/31421 70.

The third planning matter concerns the development of 230 homes at Lay Wood, between Bishops Cannings and Devizes. Town councillors have concerns about a number of reserved matters and these need to be resolved before the development can start.

## What's in a Name?

# Prince Maurice Court

*Tony Sedgwick continues his research into some of our more interesting street names. This time it is Prince Maurice Court, a collection of business units off Hambleton Avenue.*



Prince Maurice was a German Prince who had grown up in Holland and fought for both the Dutch and Swedish Armies. If we were pedantic about accuracy, this road would have to struggle with the Prince's full name "Prince Moritz Pfalzgraf von der Pfalz Court."

But why is a road named after a German Prince? Maurice's mother, Elizabeth, was the eldest daughter of James 1 of England and had married Prince Frederick V, the Elector of the Palatinate. That made him a nephew of Charles 1, his mother's brother. The thirty years war, a European-wide conflict, had forced Frederick and Elizabeth to flee and take refuge in Holland; hence Maurice's service in the Dutch Army. Quite why he went to Sweden is not clear, other than as a young soldier he wanted to be in the action wherever it happened to be.

In 1642, he left Sweden to come to the aid of his uncle in England together with his more famous brother Prince Rupert. They received

a warm welcome and were given important positions in the Royalist forces. Starting as a colonel of cavalry, within a few months Maurice had his own independent command and inflicted the first defeat suffered by the Parliamentary General Sir William Waller.

Maurice was involved in the Battle of Lansdowne, near Bath where the Royalists were soundly defeated. The survivors, including Maurice headed for Oxford, the then headquarter of King Charles, but were cut off and took refuge in Devizes, soon to be besieged by Waller.

The Prince is honoured in Devizes not so much for winning a bloody battle, but having the nous to break out before the siege was fully in place and ride through the night to Oxford to summon reinforcements. He clearly enjoyed the King's confidence because he returned with one thousand five hundred cavalry who subsequently overwhelmed the enemy at the battle of Roundway Down.

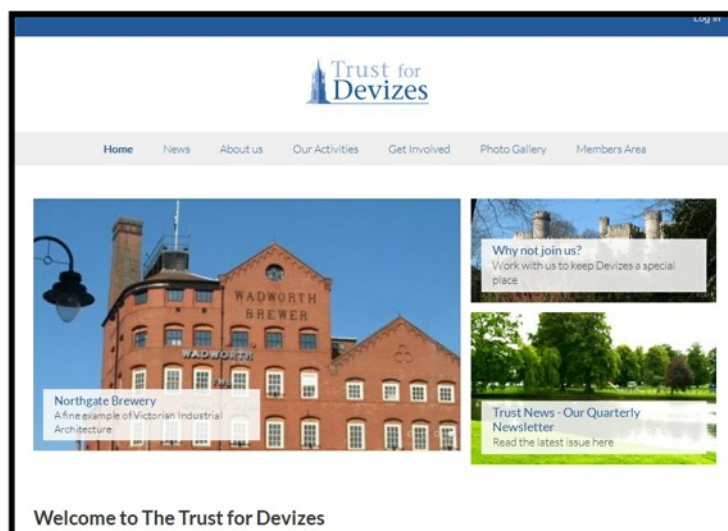
Maurice went on to win many battles for his uncle, but not the war, and after surrendering in 1646 he was banished from England. Undaunted Maurice joined a naval fleet harassing the Parliamentary fleet from a base in Southern Ireland. Eventually they were driven across the Atlantic by the Parliamentary Navy and became privateers in the West Indies, taking whatever booty they could find from any ship that took their fancy.

Maurice drowned in 1652 aged just 31. He certainly packed a good deal in his short life and is remembered as the saviour of the royalist town of Devizes by having this Court named after him.



# Online membership

*Tony Sedgwick explains the recent issues*



*The Trust's new website has been a great improvement*

In our May 2015 issue we explained that we had a new website that would also help us manage our membership database. The website is supplied by ClubBuzz Ltd, a company who have over 250 clubs using their system. However the type of site used by the Trust is a new departure for ClubBuzz who have up to now specialised in sports clubs. Tony Sedgwick, who was a Trustee at the time, is also a director of ClubBuzz and the deal made with the Trust was that they would help develop this non-sports version (called Group Buzz) in return for getting the site and support free for three years.

Whilst the site is undoubtedly an improvement on the old one, the system of annual registration used by sports clubs did not sit well with many of our members, some of whom became annoyed at the stream of emails they received. As a result, that feature has been turned off, so there will be no repeat of emails next year.

Another source of confusion has been that emails originate from ClubBuzz and not the Trust. This is because all emails are handled by a sophisticated bulk email system dealing with the many thousands of emails generated by its clubs. Members should note that any email they receive from ClubBuzz will concern the Trust and may be opened safely. Each email contains a reply address which can be used for any response.

Your committee have also pointed out that a number of options on the membership records are surplus to requirements and, although they do

not need to be completed, they do cause confusion. ClubBuzz have now agreed to look at modifying the system so that these unwanted fields can be hidden. In reviewing the system it was agreed that the benefits of the system were considerable and that the Trust should continue to work with ClubBuzz to improve the system further as per the original agreement.

One member has also raised the question of data security. In response, ClubBuzz have pointed out that the site holds an SSL Certificate which guarantees that data on the site is encrypted to stop unauthorised people obtaining that data in readable form. They have also reassured the Trust that all data is held on servers managed by RackSpace, one of the largest businesses in what are called "Server Farms" and they provide adequate protection against hackers and other forms of cyber-attacks. As an additional layer of security, the data is backed up to another server in the Amazon Cloud twice a day.

Members should also be reassured that the personal data on the site is visible only to themselves and to those members of the Committee who have responsibility for membership matters. Although, as a charity, the Trust does not have to register under the Data Protection Act, it does observe the rules laid down therein.

On behalf of ClubBuzz, Tony has apologised for any annoyance and inconvenience caused. We for our part would urge members to view the website regularly, where they will be able to read the latest news.

## Museum News

*A selection of forthcoming events*

### **LECTURE - Guardians of the Past or Looters? Connoisseurship, Collecting and the Trade in Antiquities, by James Edward Ede.**

Saturday 5th March - 2.30pm

Dealing with the revival of interest in the ancient world, the history of collecting (some of it scandalous) and the foundation of museums and also the importance of the trade and the challenges we face in the light of events in the Near East. £6.50 (£4 WANHS members).

**BOOKING RECOMMENDED**

### **LECTURE - MOOTS PROJECT with Stuart Brookes**

Saturday 12th March - 2.30pm

Details from the Museum.

**BOOKING RECOMMENDED.**

### **WALK - Normanton Down RSPB Reserve Walk, with David Field.**

Thursday 17th March 2.30pm.

Details from the Museum.

### **LECTURE - by Julian Richards**

Saturday 9th April - 2.30pm

A talk about the MAMUZ exhibition and news from the Hidden Landscapes Project. £6.50 (£4 WANHS members).

**BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

### **ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE**

Saturday 16th April

Details from the Museum.

**BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

### **OUTING: Walking the Dead: Exploring the Stonehenge Ceremonial Landscape**

Thursday, 28 April, 2016 10:30 am

Also Saturday, 21 May, 2016 10:30 am

A guided tour of the amazing collections of the Wiltshire Museum, followed by a guided walk from Durrington Walls to Stonehenge. This full day tour will be led by Museum Director, David Dawson.

*Continued overleaf*

# Museum News

*continued*

## **WALK: Imber, led by Roy Canham**

Saturday, 30 April, 2016

An archaeological walk within the Salisbury Plain military training area led by former County Archaeologist Roy Canham who has an intimate knowledge of the area and sites to be visited.

## **TOUR: EXCAVATING A NEOLITHIC HENGE - Marden Henge and the Wiltshire Museum**

Friday, 01 July, 2016

Marden Henge is the third 'super-henge' in Wiltshire, alongside Stonehenge and Avebury. In July 2016 there is a fantastic opportunity to find out more about prehistory and these enigmatic henges before a visit to see the site being excavated by archaeologists from the University of Reading. Available on selected dates from 7 July – 24 July (excluding Fridays).

## **CONFERENCE: Roads and Transport - the 2016 Industrial Archaeology Conference**

Saturday, 29 October, 2016

The theme for this year's Industrial Archaeology Conference is Roads and Transport. The venue for the Conference will be Devizes Town Hall.

*Details from the Museum.*

**Bookings and enquiries:**  
**www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk**  
**Or call 01380 727369**

# Dates for your diary

This year's AGM will be held at Devizes Town Hall on Thursday 17th March, 7pm for a prompt start at 7:30pm.

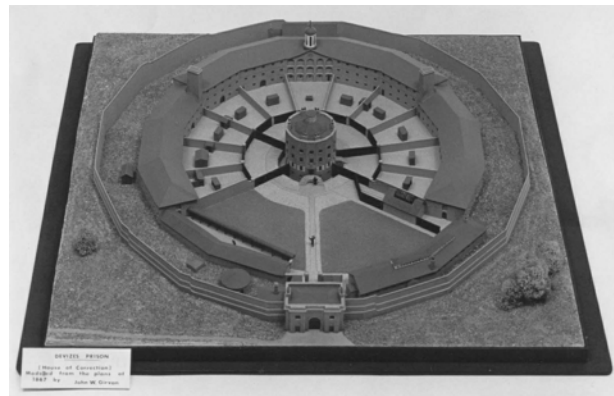
After business is over, we will welcome as our speaker Mike Stone, a Trustee of the Chippenham Civic Society. In advance of the meeting, check out the Chippenham Society's website here:

<http://www.chippenhamcivicsociety.co.uk/>.

Light refreshments will be provided.

All are welcome but non-members will not be able to vote.

## The Prison Site yields its secrets



*Left, the wall fragment. Right, a model of the prison*  
Courtesy John Girvan

There was an event of great interest at Avon Road, Devizes just before Christmas and it wasn't about a mystery sighting of Santa. While workmen were laying an new plastic water supply pipe, a section of the original stone wall of the former old prison was exposed.

The County House of correction, as it was known, was built in 1810 and opened in 1817 just off the Bath Road beside the Kennet and Avon canal bridge. The prison was built to an unusual circular 'Panopticon' plan by architect Richard Ingleman, based on an original design by English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham. The building was eventually sold to local builder W E Chivers and demolished by them in 1922 having been a military detention prison in later years. Much of the reclaimed building materials can be recognised in buildings around the area.

The stone work was excavated by a workman with a mechanical digger during the site work for the water pipes. The wall section exposed was 1.4 metres long running southwest on a radial alignment towards the central tower that was originally surrounded by cell block buildings. Another square cut corner stone block was found but not in its correct location. The whole site was in filled with brick rubble and stone from this formidable prison building. The location spot was recorded by satellite navigation at a depth of 70 centimetres below ground level. The site foreman was interested to see a scale model of the prison.

Further historical information can be gained from the book 'Doing Time in Wiltshire' published by the author and Trust committee member John Girvan, available in the Wiltshire Museum in Devizes.

Trust News is published by:

The Trust for Devizes,  
Manor Farm House,  
63 High Street,  
Worton,  
Devizes,  
SN10 5RU

Editor - Philippa Morgan  
[info@trustfordevizes.info](mailto:info@trustfordevizes.info)

The officers of the Trust are :

Chairman

Hon. Secretary Tony Duck

[email\\_tonyduckworton@aol.com](mailto:email_tonyduckworton@aol.com)

Hon. Treasurer Inez Skinner

[email\\_inezskinner@aol.com](mailto:email_inezskinner@aol.com)

The Trust is a Registered Charity No 259653



[www.trustfordevizes.info](http://www.trustfordevizes.info)