

## From the Editor

Since the last edition of Trust News, there has been an event whose outcome will be very important for the future of our town. The Coate Bridge hearing took place over three days at Braeside in April. You can read Tony Duck's excellent summary on page 3.

As a community, we are not alone in our fight against unwanted developments. Neighbourhood planning has become a focus of litigation, as local communities have sought to use neighbourhood plans to resist speculative development pressures.

The Secretary of State has been generally supportive of applications which fall outside the local plans. He has recovered appeals where neighbourhood plans have reached submission stage and attached significant weight to their policies even when they are out of date. Early attempts by developers to challenge emerging neighbourhood plans have been unsuccessful. Let's hope that we are equally successful in fending off this unwanted development.

We have also seen proposals for housing developments in the centre of town which are within the neighbourhood plan. The first is from Gaigers to develop their car park site to provide 19 residential flats together with associated parking. They will be moving their offices over the road to the former Wadworth's warehouse. The second is from McCarthy and Stone to develop approximately fifty-four one and two bedroomed Assisted Living (Extra Care) apartments at Browfort. Their proposal will see the former Kennet offices demolished with the new development built on the same area within the site.

The Trust is generally supportive of development on 'brownfield' sites, particularly where there is unlikely to be any negative impact on traffic movements. These developments will add to the overall number of properties being built and will further

## Street signs in Devizes

*Room for improvement*



*Some examples of the town's street signs*

*Pictures courtesy John Girvan*

Some of the street signs in Devizes are in a very sorry state. In addition to the indistinct signs shown above, a number of signs have been removed by property owners and never replaced.

The poor condition of the signs have become something of a joke for the locals, but is not very funny for visitors to the town that has just been rated as eighth in the top twenty guide published by The Times.

One street sign was so bad, it was repainted by the disgruntled occupant of the building on which it was attached using their own paint!

Have you noticed any signs in need of repair or replacement? Send the details to us at the address on the back page (or by email) and we will take your comments forward.

Speaking of signs, we are pleased to report that Bewley's Undertakers in New Park Street have now removed their outsized signs and replaced them with much smaller signs in accordance with their original planning application. This has been a long and costly battle. Our thanks go to Cllr Sue Evans who has been tireless in her efforts to ensure that this case did not set a precedent for other retailers.

## From the editor

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reduce the need for out of town developments.

You will notice that in this issue of Trust News we are including a leaflet about the benefits of being a Trust Member. We ask you to pass this leaflet on to a friend, neighbour or relative together with this copy of Trust News, if you can bear to part with it. Thank you.

*Philippa Morgan*

## The 2016 AGM

The Trust's 2016 AGM followed the standard format of getting the business out of the way before listening to a guest speaker. It was James Flood's turn to Chair the meeting and he took members through a summary of the key activities during 2015.

The Committee has lost a long standing member, Tony Sedgwick, but we have gained a new Trustee in Richard Ormerod. Richard has a background in planning and transport so will add valuable skills to the Committee. James has taken over the role of Treasurer from Inez Skinner who will remain on the Committee and take on the job of Membership Secretary.

Our guest speaker was Mike Stone, Chairman of the Chippenham Civic Society. Mike gave us a fascinating insight into the Society's history over the last 42 years. There were many parallels with our Trust but also a number of issues where we approach things in a different way. It was an inspiring presentation and your Committee will be thinking about how we can take on some of the ideas which have worked in Chippenham in order to improve how we do things in Devizes.

## From our postbag

The Revd. John Hawthorne writes:

I was interested to read the piece in Trust News about Devizes Union Workhouse. It so happened that last week I visited Devizes Almshouses for the first time. I was told by the Warden that the Almshouses are themselves built on the site of the former St. James' Hospital. I imagine she would know, as she also said that she used to be a nurse at the hospital.

## Long's Building

*Tony Sedgwick looks at a notable building with a fascinating history*



*The frieze above the main entrance to Long's Building.*

*Picture: Philippa Morgan*

Of all the many historic buildings in Devizes, few have the chequered history of Long's Building on the corner of New Park Street and Snuff Street. Built in 1785 by John Anstie, it was the first "manufactory" in town.

Anstie came from a family of traders. His grandfather moved to the town around 1700 and traded as a clothier from premises in the Market Place. His son, Richard, expanded the business to include the sale of snuff and by 1740 he was a partner in a snuff manufacturing business using two windmills on the castle site for grinding.

Richard had two sons, John and Benjamin (born 1743 and 1747). In 1776 these two took over their father's business, John concentrating on cloth and Benjamin on Snuff.

John had the greater challenge. Cloth manufacture was in a state of flux, the American War of Independence resulted in a serious decline in exports.

Production was also a problem. While the spinning of yarn had been automated by Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny, weaving was still a bottleneck, being contracted out to individual weavers working at home, giving the clothiers little control over volume or quality. The weavers were a well organised labour unit and strongly resisted any transfer of weaving away from their cottages. Indeed, they even persuaded parliament to forbid the use of broadlooms in manufactories.

Rather than accept defeat, John Anstie came up with what Baldrick would describe as "a cunning plan", narrow looms making narrower cloth, but still adequate for tailoring and dressmaking were not banned. All he needed was a range of cloths that could be made on narrow looms and sell well. His answer was cassimere, a closely-woven cloth predominantly of wool but shot through with silk, cotton or mohair. Such a cloth command a high price and had a ready market amongst the rich and powerful.

So, Anstie decided to risk all and build what, even today, is an impressive

structure and equip it with the necessary tools to produce cassimere in large quantities, with over 300 looms at work at the height of production.

His gamble paid off and Anstie's cloth sold well throughout Europe. (It is said that a number of crowned heads were amongst his customers). However, the French Revolution made commerce in Europe extremely difficult and this had a major impact on trade, particularly for Anstie, whose business was export-orientated. Not only did the Revolution have a disastrous effect on his exports but, even more seriously, on his cash flow. It is estimated that he was unable to collect on debts of £17,500 (equivalent to £2.3M today). The inevitable result was his bankruptcy in 1793.

Whilst Anstie's business failed, the building lived on in many different guises. His brother continued to make cloth there until around 1808, but by 1810 the Wiltshire Militia were in occupation. In 1818 it was used as auction rooms and in 1823 a firm of silk spinners were in residence, to be joined a couple of years later by a coach maker.

In 1839 it was used as a corn warehouse and in 1867 it was William and John Long who ran a corn store from there. During the First World War it functioned as a furniture showroom until, in 1917, it returned to the Anstie Family as a tobacco factory. Apart from the Second World War when it became a bonded warehouse, it remained a tobacco factory until closed in 1961. Its next and final commercial use was as a stationery store for CH Woodward and Co.

In 1985 plans were submitted to develop the site - thankfully this was refused and finally in 1993 the conversion into 30 residential units began.

After such a long and varied history it is perhaps fitting that it now has a quiet and useful future. It is regrettable, however, that it is the Longs whose name has stuck rather than the man who had the vision to build it.



# The Coate Bridge Inquiry

*Tony Duck reports from the hearing*

This is a distillation of eight and three-quarter hours of detailed questioning. It must be read in the context of the writer being, a possibly biased, layman.

At the very outset the Counsel for Wiltshire Council announced that the authority will be applying for costs from the appellant if their defence is successful.

The Inspector set out what he would be looking to both sides to demonstrate:

- Relationship of the application to the Core Strategy and the Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan. (DANP)
- Availability of land to meet the housing targets.
- Progress in meeting those targets
- Degree of harm likely to be caused by the development in respect of air quality, traffic generation, infrastructure availability.
- Balance of harm and benefit.

During the inquiry the QC for MacTaggart & Mickel referred to the DANP as "This curious document", a remark which did not endear him to his audience, and, considering that M&M's attempt to have the plan subject to a judicial review had been rejected out of hand by the High Court, a rather ham-fisted attempt at undermining its credibility! His main thesis was that the Council had failed to address a number of issues which had been raised by another inspector at the inquiry into the adoption of the Core Strategy. In particular, he argued that the town's boundaries had not been reviewed, despite the fact that his issue had been clearly addressed in DANP.

The Counsel for Wiltshire Council then made her opening statement in which she addressed the issues which had been raised and called her two witnesses: the Planning Manager of Monitoring and Evidence and the Team Leader for Spatial Planning. There followed a detailed defence of the Council's position with copious reference to various documents. I thought that the Council's case was well presented and convincing.

As well as the two major players, other parties including members of the public were able to speak. Councillor Laura Mayes and Devizes Town Mayor, Roger Giraud-Saunders, spoke of the considerable number of approaches they had received from their electorate, invariably expressing opposition to the proposed development.

Deputy Town Clerk, Simon Fisher, pointed out that the Devizes community had been involved in a number of consultations throughout the process. The document had passed scrutiny by an independently appointed Inspector and achieved a ninety per cent approval rating in a local referendum.

Professor John Kirkman spoke on behalf of The Council for the Preservation of Rural England. He contended that the proposal was outside the settlement boundary and would harm the setting of the canal and the nearby Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty. He said the appellants had shown no evidence to support their claims that the development would bring economic benefit and that the claims were merely speculations and assertions. His view was that no jobs would be created but an additional five hundred people would be seeking employment.

Eric Clarke, Clerk to Bishops Cannings Parish Council, referred the community involvement and support. He particularly drew attention to the potential effect on the hamlet of Coate where the roads are particularly narrow, single track in places.

Andy Geddes spoke on behalf of Roundway Parish Council, the parish in which the site is situated. He referred to the amount of development which had taken place in the last ten years. The population of Devizes had increased by twenty-four per cent and that of Roundway had more than doubled.

It was now the turn of the appellants to present their case. This consisted of a two-pronged attack on the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the DANP. Most of the fire was concentrated on trying to undermine the DANP. What was clearly demonstrated was that they had scant regard for the principles of localism or the government legislation on which it was founded.

The planning expert was then cross-examined by the Wiltshire Council's barrister. The exchanges on the Core Strategy were mainly on issues of timeliness and whether the Council had done sufficient to maintain the relevance of the Strategy. Turning to the DANP, she was on much stronger ground, since the grounds for the current appeal were almost identical to the grounds advanced in the High Court for having the DANP quashed and which had been dismissed by a judge in chambers, ie. it did not get off the ground.

Then came the final statements for both sides. This amounted to little more than a summarisation of their respective arguments.

*My Opinion:* The case for the DANP still looks strong. The same cannot be said for certain aspects of the Core Strategy where there is definite slippage in the programme. This is almost certainly because the planning staff has been cut to the level where the resources are not sufficient to meet the demands made upon them.

*Likely Outcome:* The final decision lies with the Secretary of State not with the Inspector. It will be some weeks before we know.

## Museum News

*A selection of forthcoming events*

**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).

**FILM AND TALK: The Battle of the Somme**

7:30 pm, Friday, 01 July, 2016

Richard Broadhead will provide a commentary to the iconic 1916 film "The Battle of the Somme", released just a month after the start of the battle. He will explain the background to the film, tell some of the personal stories of the men from Wiltshire and show how the battlefield looks today. *Booking Essential.*

**OUTING: Members visit to Marden Henge excavations**

2:30 pm, Wednesday, 20 July, 2016

Visit to the excavations at Marden Henge for WANHS Members only. Members may wish to have lunch at the Millstream pub in Marden from 1pm. *Booking essential*

**MEMBERS TOUR: Durrington Walls**

2:00 pm, Thursday, 11 August, 2016

with Mike Parker Pearson. A tour of the current excavations. Further details will be available in due course. Meeting time is 2pm at Durrington Walls.

**WALK: Dinton-Nadder Valley Landscape**

2:00 pm, Saturday, 20 August, 2016

A circular walk led by Isobel Geddes of the National Trust parkland at Dinton, mills on the Nadder, views from the ridge of the Iron Age Chiselbury Camp and the military badges at Fovant. The walk includes the National Trust parkland of Philipps House at Dinton, two picturesque mills on

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# Museum News

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the Nadder and views from the wooded Greensand ridge of the Iron Age Chiselbury Camp and the military badges dating from 1916, cut into the chalk hillside below by troops training at Fovant. This circular walk starts from the Dinton car park - SU 010 316. The full walk is about 5½ miles long, but can be shortened to 3½/4 miles.

## LECTURE: Finding Pitt-Rivers Project

2:30 pm, Saturday, 01 October, 2016

By Jane Ellis-Scchon, Project Curator at Salisbury Museum. *Booking essential.*

## 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.

## LECTURE: Roman Antikythera Shipwreck

2:30 pm, Saturday, 03 December, 2016

Searching, finding, survey and excavation. By Phil Short. *Booking essential.*

Bookings and enquiries:  
[www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk](http://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk)

Or call 01380 727369

# Dates for your diary

Our next Open Meeting for Trust members will be held in the Wiltshire Museum in Long Street on Thursday 7th July, 2016. The doors will be open at 7:00pm for a prompt start at 7:30pm. The Museum Director and Trust for Devizes Committee Member David Dawson will talk about the current exhibition 'Wiltshire's Story in 100 Objects: featuring the Lacock Cup'. There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion and, of course, to take a look at 'The Cup'. Refreshments will be provided.

Please put a note in your diary for this year's Devizes Heritage Open Day which will be on Saturday 10th September.

## Free Event Parking

*Common sense (finally) prevails*



*The beer festival takes over part of the Wharf car park*

There has been considerable confusion in the last few months about whether events taking place in Devizes Market Place should be subject to charges, despite the fact that no revenue is raised from car parking there.

At its Planning Committee meeting in April 2016, Devizes Town Council discussed whether the Town Council should take over responsibility for the allocation of free parking events spaces in Devizes. It was explained that the role of the Town Council would be simply one of principle confirmation that the event provided sufficient community benefit to authorise Wiltshire Council to allow free parking spaces to be given.

It was agreed at the meeting that Devizes Town Council should become responsible for allocating free parking

bays in off-street car parks for events in the town. It was further agreed to confirm that, when allocating free parking spaces to an applying organisation, it was their responsibility to liaise with Wiltshire Council over health and safety arrangements.

At the same meeting, the Planning Committee discussed a request from Devizes Beer Festival for allocation of free spaces at this year's Festival on 2 July. After a brief discussion about the benefit the event brings to the town, it was agreed that the Town Council would support the event by asking Wiltshire Council to allocate free parking spaces in the Wharf car park.

It is good to know that this issue has now been resolved satisfactorily for the benefit of the town!

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